

BENGAL PROVINCIAL CONFERENCE 1913

DACCA SESSION

Compiled by
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Foreword

The Bengal Provincial Conference of 1888, the first of its kind ever, recorded its deep sympathy with the National Congress and approved of the subjects for discussion in the next Congress. Simultaneously, it passed resolution recommending appointment by the Government of an independent Commission to enquire into the condition of coolies in Assam teagardens with a view to early legislation for redress of their grievances, it desired the Government to inaugurate a system of technical education in Bengal ; respectfully demanded the withdrawal of a police circular which entrusted the duty of reporting upon religious, political and other societies to the police ; congratulated the Lieutenant-Governor for his practical sympathy with local Self-Government but protested against some bureaucratic interference in running of municipal bodies, it condemned the outstill system which cheapened liquor and so threatened to perpetuate intemperance ; and finally suggested some police reforms.

The resolutions should amply illustrate the character of the Bengal Provincial Conferences, the first of which was held in 1888 and the last, as far as we know, in 1939. These were predominantly reformistic, acknowledging the benevolence of the British imperialism but progressively demanding autonomous powers for the national bourgeoisie. What then, one may ask, was the specific necessity to hold these conferences, because the Indian National Congress was serving the same purpose. The provincial conferences, in reality, supplemented the deliberations of the National Congress, by raising issues which

were not, in the national context, extra-ordinarily important but vital for the Bengal Province.

In fact the Bengal Provincial Conferences had their genesis in the refusal by the National Congress to accommodate provincial issues. In 1886 when the National Congress was held in Calcutta, Bengal delegates tried to induce the Congress to take up the coolie question. But it was voted a provincial question and so lying beyond the cognizance of the National Congress. The effort was renewed in Madras Congress, 1887 but with the same result. It was then decided to start provincial conferences to discuss issues which were not large enough for discussion in a national body but too important to be altogether ignored. Bengal took the lead, by holding the Bengal Provincial Conference with Dr Mahendralal Sarkar as the President, and about 100 delegates attending. The other provinces followed Bengal and provincial conferences, becoming a recognized institution, were held every year in almost every province of India.

The importance of these provincial conferences in the days of political regeneration of India was obvious. These infused political consciousness into the people of the provinces, educated the middle class people who were generally ignorant of great political movements. The Bengal Provincial Conferences particularly played a big role in drawing in the intelligentsia of the province into the bigger realm of politics. Almost every notable figure in Bengal during this span became involved in these Conferences; a very cursory glance over the names of the Presidents from 1888 to 1912 would make it clear. Today it might appear that these conferences, so many talking shops with no practical action programme, had no practical significance. The conferences, it is true, were so many talking shops but it should be remembered that in spite of their

allegiance to the British rulers, these were always viewed by the imperialists with suspicion and the delegates, volunteers and participants in the conferences were often politically persecuted. The achievement of the conferences was precisely in the sphere of raising political consciousness and the conferences can be as well studied in this perspective.

This book describes the Bengal Provincial Conference, 1913. Readers will form for themselves the significance of this particular Conference and need not be told more than this. The compiler has not added a single word to the deliberations of the Conference ; he has simply gathered the reports and comments from the contemporary newspapers, particularly **The Statesman** and **The Bengalee**. He has no particular axe to grind, neither has he any resources to carry on the study exhaustively. He has, just for the love of it, compiled the reports and comments to which he could have access, with the expectation that these may be handy for a general student of Bengal's political history. He will be happy if he can turn out the reports and comments on other Bengal Provincial Conferences too ; any help, in whatever form, to the project will be greatly welcome.

Yatindrakumar Ghosh

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Bengal Provincial Conference 1913

The Bengal Provincial Conference sat this noon (Saturday the 22nd March 1913) at Dacca. The huge pandal which provided accommodation for 4,000 people is almost as big as the pandal of the last Calcutta Congress and was decorated most tastefully and beautifully. Flags with inscription of 'Bande Mataram' were fixed to pots and the pandal was fitted up with electric installations. The main gate exhibited special art of Dacca and the whole way from the gate to the pandal was lined with flags. Outside the pandal there was a nice exhibition of Dacca arts. The number of delegates exceeded 400 and there was a large attendance of Bengali ladies. Long before the appointed hour crowds of visitors, Hindus and Mahomedans, ladies, and delegates began to pour in. By noon all available space in the pandal was filled up. The President Babu Aswinikumar Datta entered amidst shouts of 'Bande Mataram' followed by a

procession consisting of the Chairman of the Reception Committee, Secretaries and prominent delegates and volunteers. Police officers were seen both inside and outside the pandal.

The proceedings opened with a suitable prayer said by Babu Bishnupada Chatterjee of Hughly. 'Bande Mataram' was sung in chorus when the whole audience except three Europeans kept standing. This was followed by another song beginning with the discourse of sweet music by Swadeshi dhulis.

Chairman's Speech

The Hon'ble Babu Anandachandra Ray, Chairman of the Reception Committee, in welcoming the delegates to the provincial conference on 22nd March, said—

Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen—

Personal Observations

In rising to welcome you to this Provincial Conference, I beg leave at the outset to make a few personal observations. When I was lying very ill in my retreat in the Saonthal Parganas, some of my friends informed me that some of our leading men had suggested and some of them had requested that Dacca should, at the close of its sittings at Chittagong, invite the Provincial Conference to meet

here during the Easter holidays. Remembering the successful termination of the conference which met at Dacca in 1898, I hesitated but at last gave my consent with a sinking heart, being afraid that we would not be able satisfactorily to do our duty towards you all. When the time fixed viz., the Easter holidays came near, we found that for several reasons the holding of the Conference at this time was attended with unexpected difficulties. Our Calcutta friends intimated that the Hon'ble Babu Surendranath Banerjea and my friend Babu Bhupendranath Bose, if elected to the Supreme Council and several other leading men, would not be able to attend the Conference if held in March. We then consulted our leading men and suggested the adjournment of the Conference to a future date. But the majority decided about only a month ago, that the Conference must be held on the previously appointed days viz., to-day and to-morrow. In the chance of obtaining a postponement we had remained inactive. So when the order came, we were found napping and we had to shake off our lethargy. Since then we have done what we have been able to do. I believe you have already found out the unsatisfactory nature of our doings and arrangements in every direction. Besides my age and indifferent health there are other cogent reasons why I should

not have been called upon to perform the duty of Chairman of the Reception Committee and some of these you will know later on. In spite of my repeated requests my prayers were not granted and I had to bow to the decision of my friends and so here I am. I am indeed very sorry for detaining you so long with the details of our and my own difficulties. I hope you will kindly excuse this digression.

Dacca—the Second Capital

Dacca has passed through many vicissitudes from ancient times. As I am not an antiquarian, I will not therefore detain you with controversial disquisitions about its boundary or whether or not it was a place of any importance in pre-Budhistic times. Nor shall I say anything as to whether the famous Vikrampur had any connection with any of the great historical Vikramadityas. But I think I can safely assert that Dacca was a place of importance in pre-Mahomedan days. It is well known that Dacca at one time included portions of the present districts of Mymensingh, Bakarganj and Faridpur. This is even within the memory of many who are still living and probably of some of you who are present here today. The changes which Dacca has undergone since the days when Mahomedan rulers held sway

over this part of the country are well-known historical facts and Dacca still possesses architectural remains of great interest. To this Dacca, which by the courtesy of the present Government, if for nothing else, is designated as the second capital of the newly formed province, I welcome you, gentlemen.

Modification of Partition

To us Bengalees it is a matter of great regret that the partition has been modified and the two Bengals have been re-united, but all the Bengali speaking people have not yet been placed under one administration. Keeping asunder the Bengali-speaking population was our chief grievance—and that grievance still holds good though partially or in a minimised shape. From the pronouncements of our Viceroy we were led to cherish the hope that within a short time re-distribution of the areas of the different newly created provinces would soon be made and we had every reason to hope that some of the districts and sub-districts which are now included within Assam and Bihar would again form parts of our province. But we have been disappointed—this is a matter of great concern to us. We, however still hope that ere long this prayer of ours will be granted. Till then we should go on working together as if the separation on account of being placed under

separate administration does not exist. I therefore welcome all our brethren from Sylhet as justly and rightfully entitled to take part in the deliberations of the Conference.

Previous Conference at Dacca

More than fourteen years have elapsed since the Provincial Conference, then a plant of fresh growth, met here. At that time the late Babu Guruprasad Sen, a far greater man than my humble self in every respect welcomed the delegates. Some of you who visited us then, have very kindly taken the trouble of coming here this time also. Sadness and many gloomy thoughts overwhelm me when I try to recall the names of the many eminent gentlemen of Dacca, who have passed away from amongst us since then. Gentlemen, you who have heard Babu Guruprasad Sen, must be realising now what an apology of a Chairman my friends have set up to fill the place so gloriously held by him. It is indeed very unfortunate that many of the leading men of our country who assembled here then, though still with us, have not, for different reasons, been able to come here to favour us with their mature deliberations and advice. No one will take it amiss if I refer particularly to the absence of the Hon'ble Babu Surendranath Banerjee, whose duty keeps him at

Delhi and Babu Ambikacharan Majumdar whose failing health has detained him in Calcutta.

The Delhi Outrage

Since the last Conference a great misfortune has overtaken the whole of India and therefore its shadow has also fallen over re-united Bengal. I mean the misfortune of having our sympathetic, kind-hearted, and beloved Viceroy and Lady Hardinge attacked by a miscreant, who at least for the time being was residing in India. This nefarious attack, by the grace of God had not the horrible effect it was intended to have. We are grateful to Merciful Providence That saved without a scratch Lady Hardinge and the life of Lord Hardinge though His Excellency was seriously wounded. The whole country, from the greatest Indian ruler to the poorest Indian peasant, bewailed this dastardly outrage and sincerely prayed for the early recovery of the Viceroy, and this prayer has been granted. We should therefore, before we enter into the deliberations of the Conference, record the sense of our profound indignation at this brutal crime and our sense of relief and thankfulness at the Providential escape of the Viceroy.

Dacca University Scheme

Brother delegates, I confess I do not exactly know what, besides welcoming you and beseeching you to put your shoulder to the wheel of progress and push on the car to its destined goal, are my duties as Chairman of the Reception Committee. I do not think, I can fore-shadow the subjects which should engage your whole attention. If I did so, I think that would be an act of supererogation on my part.

Moreover as Chairman of the Reception Committee, I would not enter into any controversial topics, but leave them for the consideration of the delegates. A passing reference to the Dacca University Scheme, is probably necessary, but unfortunately it has recently become a subject of keen controversy. Even the higher education of females, is a subject upon which I am indeed very sorry to say, there are many well-educated and well-meaning gentlemen who do not look with favour. Having been a member of the Committee which framed the Dacca University Scheme, which includes higher education for girls, and the education of the sons of well-to-do persons who want education (not for seeking employment but for the purpose of improving themselves, their stock of knowledge and to be able to look after their own affairs), I cannot, under the

circumstances, discuss its details, except for the purpose of impressing upon you the fairness and desirability of the whole scheme.

These are some of the reasons why I did not wish to act as Chairman of the Reception Committee. I, therefore, beg your leave to remain quiet on the subjects of your deliberation at this stage.

The Present Situation

I have however to make some general observations about our present situation. Although the partition was modified on the 12th December 1911 and the two Bengals reunited and formed into a single province with a Governor and the enlarged Councils, Supreme and Provincial, arranged for soon after, as a matter of fact the newly formed Councils did not begin to sit before the middle of last January. It is not even three months now that the representatives of the people have come in real touch with the Government and have the ear of the Governor and his Executive Council. This is the time when we should wake up and exert ourselves to strengthen the hands of our representatives and through them do our best to acquaint the Government with all our wants, demands and grievances and through our representatives also learn what are the ideas and policy of the Government regarding our claims and

prayers. So this is a critical time when we should always be on the alert and try our best to keep our representatives well informed. If we lose this opportunity, we should be held to be undeserving of the confidence Government has placed in us by allowing us to elect our representatives. All movements for bettering our condition should proceed from us and therefore our duties and responsibilities are far greater than those of our representatives. Kindly remember this.

Provincial Conference Committee

On this subject I want to make a suggestion for your consideration. And I do so simply because the matter, I beg your leave to touch upon, is not, I presume, one of the subjects for your consideration. Brother Delegates, I hope you will kindly excuse my presumption. Do not for one moment think that I am giving you any advice. I am not so foolhardy. I want to make the suggestions for your consideration and deliberation. If it be agreeable and worth considering, give it your thought, if not, brush it aside. We have been holding these conferences year after year and passing Resolutions, some of which are reduced facsimiles of what have been passed at the Congress. Some of these are very wide, covering interests of whole India, some are

of Provincial and some of local interest, by the last I mean interest of more circumscribed areas. These Resolutions have their use—these are pre-eminently educative and remind us of our and the Government of their duties. These teach the people of the country their rights and privileges and inform the Government of their obligations and responsibilities, and the wishes and demands of the people. Beyond this they do not go. This is my humble opinion. I may be entirely wrong or I may be also partially right. Recently we have started a Provincial Congress Committee at Calcutta. I believe representatives from each district constitute the Committee. I do not know if this Committee has a constitution and any regulations or rules of business. I presume the Committee consists of very busy men. I think the Committee has not got any paid officer. I do not think the representatives from the districts can make time to attend the Committee in Calcutta. I believe very few representatives from distant districts have ever attended the Committee meetings. I do not think the Committee has a programme of work planned out. For all this ignorance I am to blame and nobody else. This forenoon I saw a copy of the Report of this Committee but I am sorry I could not get an opportunity to read it. However, I am afraid, the

Committee has not been able to do much practical work. Making representations to Government, giving opinions regarding measures started by or pending before Government, may be good work of a kind, but in my humble opinion we should do more practical work ; there is a very large field of work lying open or waste before us and we should take up in hand one or two of these at a time and concentrate our energies upon them, upon working them out to a successful termination. For this the Central Committee in Calcutta may be of great use for advising and sketching plans of work for us and helping us with suggestions, as to the ways and means for working out the plans. But it is the District and the Sub-Divisional Committees, which must work out the details. I believe there are no District Committees of the Conference. I am not for the multiplications of Associations. We have District Associations and also Associations in Sub-Divisions and some even in villages. Let these be affiliated to the Provincial Conference Committee and be in correspondence with not only the Central Committee in Calcutta, but also with other District and Sub-Divisional Committees and then co-operate with each other. Now that the supply of pure drinking water, drainage, sanitation in its largest sense, stamping out Malaria from the country,

establishment of dispensaries in insalubrious places, starting and improvement of schools for the primary and secondary education of both boys and girls, making an improvement of routes for intercommunication during the rains and dry seasons, making provision for pasturage for cattle and locating them on high lands during the rainy season when a good part of the country is flooded—and hundreds of other questions including prevention of lawlessness, dacoities, distribution of seditious leaflets. Police reform and prevention of Police zoolum are the crying need of the country,—ought we to sit idle and be content with passing Resolutions, ventilating our grievances, making known our wants and demands, once in the Congress and again in the Provincial Conference ? I think Government is much more in need of co-operation in all the matters enumerated above than of general advice. There is a definite amount to be spent for digging a tank, another amount for establishing a dispensary and a third amount for starting a boys' school and a girls' school. If left entirely to the Executive, it generally happens that the tank is dug and the dispensary and the schools established not in the most appropriate sites. Gentlemen who are of Dacca and have any connection with the District or any of the Local Boards will, I hope, bear me out on this. I can cite

instances of such misapplication of money, though I had never any connection with the District Boards. In these and like matters of utmost importance to the vast majority of the people of the country, District Associations should come forward and represent matters to the authorities timely. I must say once for all that a village chowkidar or a constable, leaving out of consideration the Presidents of Panchayats and Police Sub-Inspectors, is more feared than even the District Magistrate. We have now by the mercy of God a most kind-hearted and sympathetic Governor and I am indeed very glad in being able to say from the little experience I have been able to gather during my short observation of the attitude of the many official members of the Council, that they are willing listeners to our demands and very sympathetic. They are ever ready to help us as much as they can. We should take advantage of this situation.

The Council Reform

The situation may change, so we must, as the saying is, make our hay, while the sun shines. That the enlarged Council is, I think, a great boon if not the greatest boon that we have had since the issue of the great Proclamation of our ever beloved Queen Empress Victoria the Good of revered memory, there

is no question. I know, we wanted some more privileges and I also know that we objected and we still object to the special electorates, yet we are bound to and must admit that we have got many privileges. For these we should be sincerely grateful to the large-hearted and liberal-minded statesmen through whose agency we have gained these. But the privileges that have been granted to us will bring us no good if we do not utilise them to the best of our abilities. I think it goes without saying that we can thoroughly utilise these only through our representatives in the Council. It is therefore very necessary that we should keep our representatives well informed of the details of our wants and grievances and this we can do only through the District and Sub-District Associations and the Central Committee in Calcutta. Therefore I beg your leave to suggest that the work of the said Associations and the Central Committee should be properly regulated. These are matters of Provincial and local interest and unless we co-operate and help each other, our efforts howsoever zealous and strenuous, will be infructuous. Let us from to-day proceed to fortifying ourselves with facts and figures, work on an organised basis and I hope we shall be able to convince the authorities that our demands and prayers are not merely sentimental nor our Schemes

chimerical. Brother delegates, let us have the constitution of the Central Committee drawn up with deliberation and the duties and responsibilities of the affiliated Association and of the Central Committee formulated without any loss of time. In the present Councils we have a large number of gentlemen, both in the ranks of the elected and nominated members, who are competent to deal, to our entire satisfaction, with every question that may arise regarding the good Government and well-being of the country. I think we have already got sufficient evidence of this within the short time that has elapsed from the formation of Councils. Till now they have fought for our cause without any extraneous aid. May we not expect that when armed with reliable and definite information well arranged, these gentlemen will be able to do immense good? Now they have to hunt up their weapons of attack and defence, and we know many of them are very busy men, they cannot devote time to collect, analyse, and arrange materials lying in far distant places. Is it not our duty to help them with materials well arranged? And this we cannot do except through the Associations and the Central Committee to which I have referred. I need not dilate more on the subject. I only make the suggestion for your consideration. Being one of the elected members

of the present Provincial Council, I have felt great hesitation in making this suggestion, lest any of you gentlemen should think that I have included myself amongst the competent men capable of dealing with important questions satisfactorily. Please disabuse your mind of any such idea. Gentlemen, I have detained you much longer than I should have. I have also gone beyond or transgressed the rule that I enunciated about the duties of Chairman of the Reception Committee and for this I beg your pardon. The suggestion that I have made was uppermost in my mind and I could not repress my inclination to put it before you.

Agricultural Improvement

Brother Delegates, there is one other question, which to my mind is of the utmost importance in the present state of our country. And I beg leave to draw your attention to it. That question is the improvement of the agricultural resources of our country. If India is admitted to be principally an agricultural country, I think, I can safely assert that Bengal is essentially so. I believe, the best part of its income from all sources is derived from land and the largest portion of its population depends upon land. . And since our industry, trade, and commerce of old times have gone down very low, have indeed

approached towards a vanishing point, a large portion of the population of Bengal, which depended for its livelihood on those sources of income, has been obliged to fall back upon land. The population of the country has increased enormously ; but there has not been a proportionate increase in the area of productive land. Over and above this, the addition of the consumers, who were formerly maintained by industry, trade and commerce, has very much increased the burden on the land. Therefore, unless the productive power of the land be increased and unless the land can produce more valuable crops, we are done for. Situated as we are, the time is far distant when we may reasonably expect to make good the deficiencies by income derived from industry and commerce. The knowledge, training, and experience required, the outlay necessary, the risks to be provided for, and the last though not the least, the competition to go through, all combine to make industrial and commercial enterprises assume a forbidding appearance. Small undertakings in these lines do not and cannot pay. And we know that we Bengalees generally, have not yet been able to make any headway in these lines with small capital. Then again, some of our attempts have been throttled and smothered by foreign competition. My own idea is this, that industries and commerce in

their infancy require help from the Government of the country which I am sorry to say we have not to the extent we wish for. On the other hand the capitalists of our country are not very willing to come forward to deal with several unknown factors and risk money in the experimental stage. For these reasons, amongst others, I beg to enlist your sympathy and energy for the development of the agricultural resources of our country. Very large capital is not necessary and very large risks have not to be undergone. The plants and implements required are neither complicated nor many. The training and experience necessary for this are comparatively small, and Government help, in various ways, is, I presume, obtainable more easily. With the question of agriculture is intimately connected the question of the improvement of cattle. And this reminds me of one of the several most important Resolutions moved by my Hon'ble friend Mr. Chakrabarty, the other day in the Provincial Council. It was for providing pasture land for cattle. Everyone of you, ladies and gentlemen, is aware of the deteriorated condition of our cattle, the scarcity and high price of pure milk and its products in this country. You are also aware in what deplorable condition the cattle are kept during the rains, and how these eke out their existence during the dry

season. In olden times every village had its public pasture grounds, and now that we are more civilised our cattle are worse off than those in the less civilised parts of the country, such as the *Saonthal Parganas*, where every village has its public pasture land. Want of pure milk acts prejudicially upon the health of our infants and I believe, this one fact alone accounts for enormous infant mortality and weakling youths. Development and improvement of our agriculture are likely to enlist the active co-operation of the young men of our '*bhadralog*' class and provide occupation and employment for many, who are now unemployed. This in itself is a matter of great importance. I hope a time will come ere long when a *brahmin* boy will unhesitatingly follow the precepts of our old law-giver *Manu* and prefer cultivation to service and manual labour will not be looked down upon with contempt.

The Conclusion

Brother Delegates, I have finished. But, before I sit down, I deem it my duty to mention one circumstance which has to a very great extent hampered our work. We had hoped that with the removal of the Partition, with the advent of a Governor imbued with British ideas of administration, the nightmare that was sitting on us would

lift. Unfortunately it is not : unfortunately the petty and needless exasperation of unnecessary pinpricks continue. We have practically been debarred from enlisting our young men as volunteers ; those who agreed to serve, did not belong to any Government school or college, but, still, they were young men who were willing to offer their services and we selected them. But, the police wanted their names and other particulars. Our young friends were naturally unwilling to figure in the rolls of the secret police, no one knew what might be in store for them : we had therefore to do as best we might without those volunteers at a very late stage of our preparations and you see before you my old and veteran friend Babu Trailokyanath Bose, only a neck removed from me in the race of life, serving as a volunteer. Gentlemen, you will excuse our shortcomings which are unavoidable when even two men, who should now be living in retirement, have been compelled to provide for your comforts. If we are unable with all these difficulties to give you the reception we were able to do as in 1898, our welcome is no less warm and hearty and I am sure, friends and brother delegates, that you will accept our hospitality in the same generous spirit in which *Srikrishna* accepted from *Bidura* the humble dish of pounded rice. I have ventured to refer to divine tradition.

The occasion is not altogether unworthy. I adjure you to proceed with your work in the spirit of devotion to our motherland, which, the names I have taken must inspire in all Indians.

Brother Delegates, I have to thank you for the trouble you have taken to come over here, which from want of means of good communication has been all the more troublesome to you. I have also to thank the people of my own district who have most readily responded to our call for help. Offering our hearty welcome to you once again, I request you to elect the President of this Conference.

Election of President

In proposing Babu Aswinikumar Datta to the chair Babu Bhupendranath Basu said—

Mr. Chairman, Brother Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,—

As one of the past Presidents of the Provincial Conference it has fallen to my lot to move the adoption of practically the first resolution of the Conference, namely, the proposal that my friend Babu Aswinikumar Datta do take the chair. I wish this motion had been entrusted to worthier hands but in the absence of my friend and leader Babu Surendranath Banerjee, whom business unhappily for us but happily for the country has detained at

the present moment at Delhi, it has fallen to me to-day to move what others should have done.

Brother delegates, from me no introduction is necessary for my friend to the right. His name is well known throughout the length and breadth of Bengal, and if I may say so, of India. Many of us present here remember that in the Congress at Madras when my friend was passing his days in solitary incarceration, the mention of his name aroused an enthusiasm the like of which I have hardly seen paralleled even in the most enthusiastic days of the Congress. But, gentlemen, if no introduction of my friend is necessary, it is my duty, as your representative, to place before the public the claims my friend possesses for the honour we seek to do him to-day. Men devoted to the cause of our country have not been very few. During the last 20 or 30 years I have seen men doing their duties to their country manfully and fearlessly even in times of danger and peril. I have been a close student of public events and a humble follower of our leading men for thirty years, and I have watched the career of my friend with interest and pleasure. In the ranks of public men, and I say without fear of contradiction, I have not seen one who has devoted his life to the service of the country in the same unobtrusive way as my friend has done. His life and character have been a

great and potent force in the formation of the character of our people and the development of those activities which have secured for us an abiding place in the history of our country. Gentlemen, with his devotion, silent, unostentatious and whole-hearted to the cause of the country, he has combined a lofty religious and moral sense. It goes without saying that if our services to our country are not inspired by a high moral purpose they are hardly likely to fulfil the object. These are, gentlemen, no ordinary credentials to our suffrage on this occasion. To this may be added his struggle against the disabilities imposed upon him by his failing health for many years and his physical infirmities which have never been allowed to stand in his way. These are not all. I will take the liberty to present to you a longer roll of credentials. Man or woman, young or old, which of us here will not recall with a feeling of emotion the eventful evening of December 1908, when my friend, one of the noblest men Bengal has ever produced, a man inspired by the purest and highest ideals and to whose mind the very idea of criminality would be repugnant was suddenly kidnapped from his house in Barisal by Government without any cause being shown. Years have rolled by and times have changed and perhaps it would have been better if I were able not to refer to the unhappy incidents

of the past. But I cannot do so when we remember he was not in good health, when we remember what he has done for the country and how he had suffered for the country, when days lengthened into months and months into years, when hope followed fear and fear overtook hope, when patience was exhausted, when in sultry summer my friend was suffering in the hot climate of Lucknow, all Bengal, from one end to the other, all India, from the seas to the hills, were throbbing with the suffering of my friend, it is difficult to avoid a reference to that part of my friend's life. Then followed his release. The darkness began to lift. I was present in the Council chamber when the Viceroy announced it, and I knew personally against what tremendous opposition. Humble as I am very far removed from the officials I was so overpowered with emotion that I went forward to Lord Minto, took his hands and said "This evening Your Excellency has done something which has relieved Bengal of a load of sorrow." The officials generally are a stolid people and oftentimes sceptical. They looked astonished but Lord Minto stretched his hand to me. From the Council chamber I hurried to the College Square to the house of another friend of mine and to his wife, almost beyond hope, I carried the glad tidings. In the deportation of my friend and those who were placed

in the same unhappy predicaments as he was without any charge Government presented a blank cheque against our national credit. We feared that the cheque would remain unhonoured but by the grace of God it was not to be so as often happens with those who try to break a bank. The coup recoiled upon itself. That cheque was honoured in the currency of faith and loyally coined in the mint of our national life and the blow aimed at us fell upon the Government. It was not because of the blunder the Government committed that we are sorry, for blunders we are all apt to commit. I do not charge Government with any act of faith but I wish they had expressed greater prudence and caution as we say in legal parlance. I am sorry, however, for Government that it should have had to rely on the information of so tainted a character as to associate my friend here with crime which necessitated his deportation without trial. Those were the days of great sorrow indeed, sorrow to my friend and his family and to all of us. But I do not share in the opinion of the great poet the compared sorrow to a priestess in the vault of death : rather, I look upon sorrow as a ministering angel in the temple of life. Evolution would be a mere shibboleth if there were no sorrow in this world and religion a string of meaningless formulae. The great onward march of life lies

fundamentally in its capacity of assimilating human sufferings and human sorrows with human progress. Gentlemen, happily for us with the advent of our gracious sovereign those memories have become things of the past. I have ventured to recall them to-day because of the unique character of the occasion. When I entered this place, I heard strains of the music that was taboo for years and the shouts of that beloved name which must rouse the deepest sentiments of devotion in the Bengalee breast. And when I saw Babu Trailokyanath Basu wearing the badge of the Captain of your volunteers I was so overpowered that I felt I might be unable to discharge the duty entrusted to me. If I have referred to things what had better been forgotten you will excuse me, for the occasion demands it.

Babu Aswinikumar Datta, in behalf of the assembled delegates, I offer you the Presidentship of the Conference. I deem it not altogether unworthy of you. You are one of those who laboured to reunite Bengal. Your efforts have been crowned with success. We Bengalees reunited offer you the laurel-wreath that Bengal can offer to her devoted servants. Gentlemen, we shall soon disperse but I hope and trust the memory of the occasion will linger in our minds. You will remember the

unique character of the gentlemen called upon to preside at this assembly. Babu Aswinikumar Datta, you have rendered great service in the past, your presence here to day will impart in the life of our young men a fraction of the devotion that you have displayed in the discharge of your public duties, a fraction of your unselfish patriotism. If you can inspire us with some of your courage to follow in your footsteps at whatever distance it may be, if you can re-instil in' o us the spirit we are losing, if you can bring to Bengal that was in her, if you can make us forget our little jealousies, our personal grievances, our futile differences—I will not call them animosities—inspired with one hope, animated by one desire, viz., to push on the path of progress, to achieve for our country a place in the history of nations, you will have done a great and noble duty for the lasting benefit to our country. With these words I call upon your brother delegates to carry the proposal with acclamation.

Babu Trailokyanath Bose seconded the motion.

In supporting the motion, the Hon'ble Mr. B. Chakraverty said :

Mr. Chairman of the Reception Committee, members of the Committee, ladies and gentlemen,—I consider it a singular privilege to be able to associate myself with my friends Mr. Bhupendranath Bose and Mr. Trailokyanath Bose in supporting the proposal which has been made for your acceptance, viz., that Sreejut Aswinikumar Datta do take the Chair for the purpose of guiding your deliberations. But, gentlemen, I feel a certain amount of difficulty in connection with the task, which has been imposed upon me by your Chairman, because I have to speak with regard to a personal friend, and I appeal to you whether in speaking with regard to a personal friend you can do justice to your friend, if you have to speak in public and if the time given to you is, as it must be, limited. Then, there is a further difficulty when a man feels most he is least able to express himself because his heart is full and I can assure you, gentlemen, that my heart is full at this moment. To put the matter as briefly as I can, let us consider the qualifications which the intended President should possess. Do you want a man of ripe judgment for your President? I can assure you I can name no other person whose judgment is riper. Do you want

a man who has spent his life in the service of the country? Sreejut Aswinikumar Datta has lived in the contemplation and study of his country and its people and has devoted his life to the service of the country. Is personal sacrifice any indication of the character of the President? Sreejut Aswinikumar Datta gave up the prospect of a lucrative profession before him, the prospects of a large income and honour. But what is more, whatever patrimony he had owned, he sacrificed the whole of that for the cause of his country. Do you want devotion to the welfare of your country as a quality in the Chairman for your deliberations? Gentlemen, I can assure you, you have no better devoted servant of Bengal than Sreejut Aswinikumar Datta. Further I have very little to say in favour of a man specially on the occasion of a public function unless the man has wide sympathies—unless the man has loved. If the man has loved truly, has he suffered? I can assure you that Sreejut Aswinikumar Datta has loved his country and has suffered—bitterly suffered—for the love of his country. I am one of those who do not believe in love unless that love is tested by sacrifice—sacrifice in the form of suffering. Gentlemen, we have further to bear in mind that as the love of the man has been a true love—and as the poet says, the course of true love never runs smooth,—if he

has suffered, he has suffered rightly. Gentlemen, I have referred to only a few of the most prominent qualities of the man who is to preside over your deliberations. But I have not referred to the best and highest qualification in him. I don't believe a human being can do his duty either to himself or to his family or to his countrymen unless he is a man who fears and loves God. I offer you a man who has all through his life loved God, feared God, tried to follow the injunctions of God according to his own light. I offer you a gentleman who derives his support from a source which is unfailing. He derives his judgment from a source where judgment is unerring. He loves his country as he loves his God. He derives his love from God who is Love itself. I offer you, gentlemen, a man of law and orderliness who derives his law from Him who is Law itself. (Turning to Babu Aswinikumar) I call upon you to preside over our deliberations to-day. In inviting you to the Chair, I will depart from what has already been said by my two previous friends. What I desire to say is this : I want you to accept the Chair and thereby to honour us, our country and honour India. In electing you President I shall congratulate myself, I shall congratulate this assembly and I shall congratulate this province and India.

Babu Kishorymohon Chaudhury seconded Mr. B. Chakravarty's support and the motion was carried with enthusiasm.

President's Address

Rising amid prolonged shouts of 'Bande Mataram' the President Babu Aswinikumar Datta began to address the Conference. The President first addressed the audience in Bengali and while he referred to the kindness and love felt for him by the people on all occasions of his life, he was so carried away by emotion that he burst into tears.

Later on, he delivered the prepared address in English :

Fellow-delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It would be impossible for me to express in words my feeling of gratitude to you for the very great honour you have done me by electing me to the office of the President of this representative assembly in this historic city which is replete with inspiring memories of the past and promises to regain her former position in the near future—an office of which, conscious of my own shortcomings, I feel I am altogether unworthy. I see many around me who would really adorn the chair, but since your

choice fell upon me, a very very humble man who has done nothing to merit this honour, and your call came as a command, I had no option but to obey, in spite of the present state of my health. Now that I have been placed in this position, I crave your indulgence and sympathy in the discharge of the duties attached to it, and I am sure, you will be as generous in giving me your help as you have been in calling me to preside over your deliberations.

Mr. Hume

At the very outset, Gentlemen, it is my melancholy duty to offer our homage of love, respect and admiration to the sacred memory of one, whose name will be handed down from generation to generation all over India as that of an apostle of Love and a messenger of Hope to the down-trodden and despondent millions of this country, who felt the same love for India as he did for his Motherland, who rallied the scattered forces of Indian patriotism and breathed into them new life and power for the political regeneration of this Peninsula, the great sage, the venerable '*Rishi*', at whose feet educated India sat to learn the lessons of nation-building.

Fellow-delegates, need I tell you whom I mean? —Allan Octavian Hume, who passed away on the thirty-first of July last. May his soul enter into bliss and rejoice for ever and ever!

The Outrage on the Viceroy

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, I have the painful duty of expressing our abhorrence and detestation at the wicked and dastardly attempt that was made on the life of our Viceroy when he was in the very climax of the day's rejoicings at Delhi on the 23rd of December last—our Viceroy, who by a magic wave of his hand transformed a scene of seething discontent, misery and confusion into one of contentment, peace and happiness; to whom Bengal particularly owes a debt of endless gratitude for the reversal of the odious Partition of 1905; who, even when showers of blood were raining from the wounds and he was writhing with excruciating pain, never lost, for a moment, the benignity of his disposition and his confidence in his people; who, even in that hour of severe trial had the extraordinary magnanimity to say that, in spite of what the miscreant had done to him, his beneficent policy to India would never be changed. Gentlemen, it must have been some consolation to His Excellency to see how all India from one end to the other sympathised with him and expressed her admiration at the fortitude and forbearance which he and Her Excellency Lady Hardinge exhibited on the occasion. May God speedily restore him to his former health and strength !

Lord Hardinge will ever be remembered by the hundreds of millions of this country as the great Pacificator ; and notwithstanding his errors,—one of which, if I may be pardoned to say so, is perhaps, the transfer of the Capital to Delhi at a fabulous cost,—notwithstanding such errors, and of human beings who does not err ?—his name will be cherished with love and gratitude by the numerous races of the land.

Anarchism and Dacoities

We regret very much that the villain who perpetrated the atrocious crime, just referred to, has not yet been found out ; and who does not feel pain at the thought that the vestiges of anarchism have not yet been clean swept away ? It is really distressing that, while the whole country is rejoicing over the reversal of the partition of Bengal and the many benevolent projects launched for the spread of education, improvement of sanitation and other means of domestic advancement, these misguided beings find opportunities to hatch their infernal plans in some gloomy recess unobserved by men, put them into execution and go about undetected. They and the dacoits, who have, of late, grown to be such a terror to the country have been a pest which both the Government and the people should be all they can to get rid of.

Means for Suppression

Government, I fear, have not yet been able to do as much as is needed in that direction. It reveals the incapacity of the police. Most of the dacoits are still at large and prowling about for commission of further ravages. Very few have yet been detected. In one case, a dacoit was wounded by the villagers, yet the man could not be traced. In trying to find out anarchists and dacoits, our police officers have in certain cases succeeded in subjecting to the indignity, worry and harassment of a house-to-house search quite a large number of quiet and law-abiding people and creating in their minds a new feeling of intense disquietude and alarm. Fifty houses were searched recently in Backergunge and most of the searches have furnished no clue. Presumably, there was no justification for them. These searches serve only to irritate people and slacken the hold of Government on their minds.

It is our earnest prayer to our popular Governor that he should put a stop to such indiscriminate house searches and follow the principle enunciated by Sir John Howett, the late Lieutenant Governor of the United Provinces that no house should be searched on mere suspicion, unless there was 'justifiable ground' for such suspicion. I would humbly suggest that house-searches should not be allowed on

the mere report of a police officer, that some senior Deputy Magistrate, who has known the people of the district for some time, should be consulted as to whether there is any justifiable ground or not, and then only on his advice the search might be undertaken.

It is absolutely necessary that the cadre of the police department should have more capable men than that it can at present boast of. Higher salaries and better prospects would attract better men. This is a feeling based on good grounds in favour of the introduction of a competitive examination for the selection of these officers. The system of nomination is always apt to degenerate into nepotism. Men who have passed the competitive test, if they are properly trained for some time, would surely improve the personnel of the Police Service.

Now about our own duties

Every Indian who has the welfare of his country at heart should do his level best to bring these offenders to justice. Public opinion should be educated, it should be driven home into the minds of our countrymen what 'Bhishma' said to 'Yudhishthira' :

"Virtue hit by the arrow of vice comes to society for redress. If society withholds its assistance, half

the vice attaches to its leader, one-fourth goes to those that do not decry it and a fourth only sticks to the sinner. Not till the sinner is punished does the sin descend from the shoulders of the community to those of the sinner."

There are two things, I am afraid, which impede the hearty co-operation of our villagers. The first is, that they have very little confidence in the police officers and are afraid lest they, in giving any information, be themselves entangled; and the second is, that they are in mortal dread of those malefactors, lest they wreak their vengeance on them, while they have no means to defend themselves. It is, by all means, advisable that, under proper safeguard, these villagers should be given fire-arms and trained to use them for defence. It is heart-rending to think that in this poor country, the few, who have inherited or saved out of their own earnings a little, should see themselves molested and stripped of even that little without the power of raising a finger to protect it.

Now, let us think of the causes which led to these dacoities. I refer only to those that are supposed to be committed by young men who belong to the '*Bhadrolog*' class and not to those of the 'professional' dacoits. These half-educated young men, I am sure, had never the benefit of religious and moral

training ; most of them, I believe, have no means of subsistence and others, having such means, do not know how to spend their time and to employ them usefully ; and all these having no fear of resistance on account of the practical disarmament of the country have been emboldened to do their devilish work. I am glad Government have, at last, realised to themselves the effects of a Godless training in our schools and colleges and are now trying to mature a plan of religious and moral instructions. It is also imperatively necessary that both Government and we should endeavour to open new paths for living. The other day His Excellency Lord Carmichael took the students to task, in this very city, for seeking Government appointments and not trying to have a second string to their bow ; but where could they get this string from ? Unless Government and our people make sufficient arrangements for Agricultural, Technical, Industrial and Commercial education and extend the spheres of Medical education and education in Engineering, where is the opening for thousands and thousands of our young men to scrape up a livelihood ? And as to Government employment, why should not Government itself trench upon the almost unbroken monopoly of European officers in many departments of the Public Services to provide subsistence to the children of the soil ?

Swadeshi

In this connection, I must deplore the decadence of the Swadeshi spirit which provided food for so many thousands of our countrymen and sustained the patriotic zeal of hundreds of thousands. What is it that has overtaken us? Imports of foreign wares, notably cotton goods, have increased considerably, and many, even of our educated men, have taken to them without any compunction: Everybody knows that the boycott of foreign goods that was declared was only a temporary measure to draw the attention of the British public to our grievances caused by the partition of Bengal. The partition is gone and the boycott is gone too, but Swadeshi is not gone. We must look to the economic condition of our country, we must see how she has been reduced to the verge of ruin, how she has come to such straits that while the income of an Englishman is more than Rs. 600 a year, that of an Indian is according to the most liberal calculation, not more than Rs. 27 ; and is only about Rs. 2 a month sufficient to provide a man with food, clothes and other necessities of life? Shall we stand by unmoved and suffer our own brothers and sisters to die like flies for want of food, to succumb to the scourge of Malaria and other diseases because they have not sufficient nourishment to withstand their attack? If we are men, we shall

not allow it. Alas! in exultation over the withdrawal of the partition of Bengal we have forgotten Bengal herself. That she is suffering from sheer exhaustion and is dying of inanition, we have clean forgot it. If we have any souls left to us we must try to revive her. We must call back the Swadeshi spirit,—its enthusiasm and vigour. We must promote Swadeshi industries and purchase Swadeshi articles even if the prices be far higher; we must do this for our own protection, for our own safety, else we are lost and there is no hope for us. There are some traitors among ourselves who give us foreign goods and palm them off as Swadeshi! We must have no dealings with them, nothing should be done which might encourage them in these fraudulent practices. Many of the Joint-Stock Companies we started are pining away because of the want of business capacity in most of our men and of honesty in some and the pressure of unequal competition with foreigners. Until we make ourselves alive to our interests and duties involved therein, until we take steps to see that the education of our young men tend to make them business-like, there is hardly any prospect of improvement. And is it too much to hope that our Government should, as suggested by Lord Minto and Sir Edward Baker, take measures to protect our infant industries? In order that we may rise economically.

socially, and morally, it is imperative that our Government and we should work shoulder to shoulder, in love and confidence.

Co-operative Credit Societies

In this connection, I cannot help expressing my warm appreciation of the good and useful work that our Government has inaugurated for ameliorating the condition of the poor people of this country, who are over head and ears in debt, by establishing Co-operative Credit Societies in all parts of India. I have been reading the reports of some of these Societies kindly sent to me by their indefatigable Registrar, Mr. J. M. Mitra, to whom we are so much indebted for his labours. I have been forcibly struck with the manner in which some Societies of Midnapur have begun their work. These Societies have been relieving the poor by loans at a small interest, looking after the manner in which they spend the money lent them, deciding petty disputes by arbitration, and out of their profits, maintaining elementary schools, constructing means of communication in villages, excavating tanks, giving medical relief to those who are in need of it and, above all, fostering a corporate life by bringing the villagers together, making them resolve to be frugal and prudent and helpful for the good of the whole village

community. A very good beginning has been made ; and I would recommend the establishment of such Societies all over the Presidency. I hope you will agree with me in thinking that such Societies would quicken our villages into action and improve their condition and tend to revive the spirit of the village communities of old. Now, having taken a cursory glance of what is uppermost in our minds, at present, let us formulate a plan of work for ourselves and of what we expect the Government to do, for the growth and advancement of our country.

Hindus and Mussulmans

And in this work Hindus, Mussulmans and Christians should all take part as we are all of the same race. Mussulmans who have been living here for centuries, now, undoubtedly, are Bengalees in every sense of the word ; and so are the resident Christians. We all have to join hands in the service of our common Mother. We all "are citizens of one country, subordinate to one power, subject to one legislature, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal and woe by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens." Whatever may be the differences in our religious and social customs, our political interests are identical ; and as to differences

in our religions, it may safely be asserted that stripped of the outer forms, they are essentially one. If a Hindu reads the Quran or the sublime writings of Maulana Rumi or the ecstatic "Gazals" of Hafez, he will wonder at the agreement he will find in the cardinal principles of his religion and of Islam; and in the courses of what is termed 'Ishq' by the Mussulmans and 'Prema' or 'Bhakti' by the Hindus. The effect would be similar if a Mussulman would care to read the Upanishads, the cream of the Vedas, or the Bhagavat or Bhagavad Geeta; and so with the perusal of Christian Scriptures and the writings of Christian devotees. It is simply because of the ignorance of the "Shastras" of each other that we feel we differ so much. I have already said our political interests are the same; and having lived for centuries together, have not Hindus and Mussulmans felt as if they were related to one another? In fact the endearing terms, 'Dada, Chacha, Kaka, Mama,' have for generations, been 'interchanged between Hindus and Mahomedans and men of one sect invited their friends of the other to all domestic ceremonies, even religious festivals. I am sorry to have to say that there has been some estrangement now. I hope, my Mussulman brothers will pardon me if I say, that some of them led away by the 'favourite wife' theory, have thought it fit to

mark out separate lines for themselves apart from Hindus. I am glad that there are fate seeing men among them who know very well that this theory cannot last long ; and when our brothers will have advanced as far as the Hindus have, the illusion will disappear. Even the Indian Government are bound to say with Sir John Meston—‘Disunion and friction will only mean weakness to both parties and so long as public questions are decided on racial grounds rather than on their merits, the progress of India will be hampered.’ How much I admire the statement made by my friend the Hon’ble Mr. Fazlul Haque before the Public Service Commission, that he considered “it repugnant to their sense of self-respect that the followers of Mahomet should consent to remain for all time, a dead weight on other advancing communities constantly hampering them to their progress.”

We are verily linked together ; and together we rise, together we fall. It is because of the affection and regard that have grown between Indian Hindus and Mussulmans for such a long time, that the Hindus have sympathised so feelingly with the sufferers in Turkey and have wished the victory of the Turks in the war.

Our Aim and Work

Fellow-delegates, we have met to discuss measures

and devise and adopt means by which we could remove the evils that exist in our society and promote our well-being ; and is it not our ambition that we should be recognised as a unit among the nationalities of the world ? Well, Gentlemen, in order to be so recognised it is necessary that we should shake off our diffidence and dependence on others, gird up our loins and put forth the energies we have to consolidate ourselves into a nation. More than a quarter of a century ago, came to our ears the trumpet-call of that noble soul at whose beck the whole of India hurried to form the Indian National Congress, whose departure from this earth we mourned just now :

“Sons of Ind, why sit ye idle

Wait ye for some Deva's aid ?

Buckle to be up and doing,

Nations by themselves are made.”

Have we responded to it like men ? No. I must confess we have not. Twenty-eight long years have rolled away, yet we are not very far from what we were at that time. The sky is still overcast, but Gentlemen, have we not marked a silver lining to the clouds ? The upheaval of the last few years, the restless agitation against the Partition of Bengal and the tremendous force of the Swadeshi movement—have they not proved that we still have ‘that’ left

in us which would stand us in good stead if we wanted to occupy a place in the scale of nations? Did not the life, the vigour, the power that was in them lead even distant nations to change the opinion that they hitherto entertained about the Bengali race? Yes, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have found out the strength that is in us. We now know that we can, if we will shape our destiny. We have not to wait for some Deva's aid. We have got to take our destiny in the hollow of our hands and shape it as we will. We have to awaken the divinity that it is in us and it will be as we want it to be. It is our earnest will that will bend all the forces at work according as we want them to. The pride of intellect is ours, that the race of Sri Chaitanya, of Ramprasad, of Vidyasagar is an emotional race nobody can doubt,—sometimes our emotions in excess mark our failing and it cannot be gainsaid that a nascent love for the Motherland is visible in the sphere of our emotions; but the will is torpid dormant. We have to rouse in us by all means the fire that blazed in the hearts of our ancestors of old. It is smouldering in us, we blew it into a flame, ashes again are collecting over it, we have to blow on it again, kindle it and keep it up, so that its warmth may reach the farthest corners of the land. We must see it consume all the evils that have

accumulated here for ages. No 'nonpossumus', no. Let us brace ourselves up for another continuous round of work. There are some who say that public spirit is on the wane and we have been tired of the activity we exhibited recently. I do not believe it. There is a spell of apparent inaction because we have not embarked on a systematic plan of work. Let that be defined and taken up, and you will see how satisfactorily it will speed on.

Our work is two fold : (1) in reference to Government ; (2) in reference to the people.

In reference to Government our duty is (i) to co-operate with them so as to make the administration smooth and easy ; (ii) to criticise measures of Government and point out those which we consider fraught with evil to ourselves and therefore to our rulers ; and to press on them our claims and aspirations for those political rights and privileges which we consider, ought to be ours.

We have repeated, again and again, that our aim is to be a Self Governing country on the lines of the Self-Governing Colonies of the British Empire ; and I do not know of any power that is capable of dislodging us from that position. Our ambition is based on the bed-rock of what is called the Magna Charta of British India, the principle of which has been asseverated again and again and

emphasised and accentuated by successive sovereigns who loved and love their Indian subjects ; and to-day or to-morrow it is bound to be fulfilled. There has been enough of throwing of cold water on this idea ; there have been enough of clever interpretations of memorable documents which support from quarters whence we least expected them and there has been misconstruction of the very principle itself ; but we are not going to budge an inch. In urging the much-needed reforms which tend towards that goal we must leave no stone unturned in the line of constitutional agitation, we must show that we are in earnest about them—dead earnest. We must not rest until our claims are realised.

To secure such reforms we have to take up the second division of our work :

(i) We have to educate public opinion, so that Government may clearly see that the cry comes not only from the classes but also from the masses : and (ii) we have to raise our people to such a standard, socially and morally, that our Government may have no option but to grant them the reforms demanded and the whole world may proclaim them richly worthy of them. These two sub-divisions of work would, as a matter of course, advance by inter-action.

To educate public opinion on a particular

question or some particular questions is the easier of the two, but even that also has been wholly neglected by us except on the Partition of Bengal. Again and again resolutions have been moved and passed for carrying the questions discussed by the door to door and leavening the main body of the people with their ideas but nothing worth any prominent mention has yet been done. It is not that we cannot do it, it is not very difficult to send round agents under proper guidance for this sort of work, but the motor force has been wanting. We are profoundly grateful to our leaders for what has been achieved and we have to remember that 'Rome was not built in a day,' but, we must confess that there has been no agitation among us except the one just referred to, which can properly be called an agitation, none worth naming beside the agitations in England.

Work among the masses

There are some who say that the masses would never care to understand these things and have not the capacity to do so. Gentlemen, the manner in which the masses responded to the call for agitation against the Partition clearly shows that they are not as obtuse and indifferent as some of us would assume them to be. I do sincerely think that as to the capacity of comprehension of subjects that interest

them, our masses do not yield the palm to the masses of any country in the world. It is well known that many a Backergunge or Mymensingh ryot exhibits a striking cleverness in conducting even intricate law suits. What is needed is to inform our people with ideas on subjects that ought to interest them. I have often addressed them on important subjects and have found them intelligent enough to grasp my thoughts. I will tell you of one instance. It was about the end of 1885 or the beginning of 1886, I was explaining to them, in some meetings, the necessity of praying to Government for the introduction of elective principle into the constitution of the legislative councils. Some of you may remember that a little over a year after that, a quarter of a century ago, a petition embodying that prayer signed by forty-thousand literate men of my district was submitted to the Honourable the House of Commons. I had the pleasure of exhibiting that petition to the Madras Congress of 1887. Well, gentlemen, one day some peasants came and asked me about the movement; they wanted me to explain what it was I was about. Before I could answer, a thoroughly illiterate man stepped forward and promptly said—"I will explain it. Just as we appoint arbitrators according to our choice and abide by their decisions, the Babu wants that we should ask 'Sircar' to give us the power of

choosing our own law-makers and abiding by the laws passed in consultation with them. Such persons would listen to our suggestions more readily and look after our interest more keenly than those who do not depend for their appointments upon our will." I was charmed with the manner in which the subject was made clear to his fellows. I am not prepared, gentlemen, to allow any remark to go without contradiction which says that our masses have not the power of comprehending and appreciating our work. It is imperative that they should join our ranks if we want to impress the Government with the urgency of our claims. Think of the prodigious efforts that are needed even in England to bring about necessary reforms where both the rulers and the ruled belong to the same nation. Imagine then the difficulty of our situation—what we have to do for the purpose of impressing what we want upon the minds of our rulers who are foreign to us by half a world's distance, foreign to our languages, habits, customs, ways of life and the very modes of thinking.

The second sub-division of our duties in reference to the people,—that of raising their social and moral standard will be, probably, more difficult, but none the less attractive. I will, in a few minutes, present to you a list of some of these duties. In their

performance, the zest and excitement of an agitation will surely be wanting ; but the achievements of steady, solid, genuine work and the refreshing consciousness of doing one's duty will give tone to our national character, be a resistless incentive to more strenuous work and spell Progress. In such work although the impetus will come from within, we will certainly count upon the sympathy and co-operation of Government.

Ladies and Gentlemen, we are happy in having as our Viceroy His Excellency Baron Hardinge, the author of United Bengal, and as our Governor His Excellency Baron Carmichael, who has in such a short time won the hearts of the people entrusted to his care. We are proud of our Governor and we ought so to comport ourselves that he may be proud of his people. Nothing, I believe, would please him so much as to see us develop ourselves into a self-reliant and self-governing community worthy of the best privileges of the British Empire.

To bring about such a consummation, mutual good-feeling and co-operation of the Government and the people are necessary.

Our Claims and Government Measures

I will not tire your patience by speaking on most of those of our pressing claims which we want

Government to fulfil and the schemes and measures of Government which are being discussed at present. I will leave them to abler hands to be dealt with during the course of our deliberations. Subjects such as the question of the Simultaneous Examinations, the Separation of the Judicial and Executive Functions and other questions before the Public Services Commission, the rules for the election of members to the Legislative Councils, the Conspiracy Bill, and other important subjects, will come up as we proceed. I will say a few words on the recent declaration of the Educational Policy by the Government of India, the Dacca University Scheme, Local Self-Government, Sanitation, Drainage and Water Supply and Religious Ministration in Jails.

*Petitions of Sylhet, Manbhum etc. for Re-union
with Bengal*

Before I speak on these subjects I must say I am deeply pained and I am sure you all are, at the rejection of the petitions of the residents of Sylhet, Goalpara, Manbhum, a part of Singbhum and of Purnia, seeking re-union with Bengal. They are our kith and kin, have generally the same habits and customs as we have and speak the same language as we do. They were encouraged to submit them by certain words in the memorable Despatch of the

25th August, 1911, but their hopes have been blasted. They should try again and we should all join with them to bring about the desired end.

*The Educational Policy of the Government
of India*

In taking up the subject of Education the noble words of His Gracious Majesty the King-Emperor which have been made the exordium of the recent resolution of the Government of India on their Educational Policy, again and again come to my mind and fill it with hope. In fact, that royal heart pulsating with deep love for India preluded those words by saying expressly, "Today in India I give to India the watch-word of hope." Since the utterance of these words the heart of all India has been swelling with hope and now has come the declaration of his august representative in India and his councillors. It is instinct with a sincere desire to elevate the hundreds of millions of this country from the humblest to the highest, for which we are all exceedingly grateful.

Religious and Moral Training

The declaration says—"In the fore-front of their policy the Government of India desire to place the formation of the character of the scholars and the

under-graduates under tuition,” and in making this announcement Government have emphasized the value of religious and moral training in schools and colleges. We hail this pronouncement with delight. There is no subject of more vital importance to my country than this and I agree with those who lament the tendency of the existing systems of education to develop the intellectual at the expense of the moral and religious faculties.” I do not see why Government should still hesitate to introduce a system of religious instruction. The principle of neutrality would, in my humble opinion, be no bar to its introduction, if, according to the suggestion of Dr. Martin, late Director of Public Instruction, Bengal (i) Societies be formed for religious instruction “on the line of universal truths with the cardinal idea of a Supreme Being controlling and regulating our actions”, and discourses on the lives of saints of all countries without any distinction of colour or creed ; and (ii) different Associations of students of different sects be started under the presidency of teachers of different persuasions for the purpose of training them according to their respective Scriptures, traditions and modes of thought, barring what would be offensive to their sects.

The residential system has my hearty approval but I respectfully demur when Government say :

“Already in some first-class institutions in the country admirable arrangements have been made on European lines to secure the full benefits of the residential system.” I am afraid, arrangements on European lines might tend to denationalise our youth with all the advantages that have accrued to us from Western culture, and they have been many, I am not prepared to allow the youth of my country to forsake the simple habits of our forefathers. I do not surely advocate squalid and insanitary living but the less the complex machinery of Western life is introduced, the better for our welfare. The very climatic conditions of this country are against the adoption of European habits and ways of life. There is some truth in

“West is West,

East is East,

And the twain shall never meet.”

An All-Wise Providence has brought them together that they may meet in the Essentials, not in the Externals. European teachers coming in contact with Indian pupils should always keep this in view.

Primary Education

Nothing could be more welcome to us than the prospect of the spread of Elementary Education ; but

if the average cost of maintenance of a primary school be what Government have estimated it to be—Rs. 375 per annum it will take an unconscionably long period to achieve even so much as has been sketched out at present. Speaking of Bengal, I believe, Rs. 250 would do for a small primary school. Although the salaries of the teachers may be small, they have a recognised position in the village, they are generally provided with food by the village people and given perquisites on many occasions. For the purpose of raising the standard of schools we should hear that nearly 700 schools were established in Eastern Bengal in 1909-10. Could anything be more disastrous than this to the cause of Education? These schools, although not coming up to the prescribed standard, were at any rate, doing some good. Steps could be taken gradually to improve the quality of teaching. As for buildings, they need not cost about Rs. 700, as is calculated at present and benches and chairs may be dispensed with. I should prefer reverting to our old simpler ideals.

Recognition of Secondary Schools

The proposal for the withdrawal of the recognition of secondary schools from the Universities and placing it in the hands of Local Governments has become a source of uneasiness and alarm to persons interested

in education. Governments shall have to depend upon Inspectors. Would it be right to leave such an important matter of vital interest to the people to the decision of one individual instead of a body of learned men who constitute the Syndicate of the Universities ? True, they very often depend on the reports of Inspectors, but aggrieved parties may now appeal to the Syndicate for justice and the Syndicate may be approached more easily than high Government officials. There are Inspectors and Inspectors. There are some who do not understand the difficulties of people starting schools, some who care more for their fads than education, some are not often guided by purely educational considerations and some who in going to improve schools sometimes improve them off the face of the earth.

Technical, Industrial and Agricultural Education

Government have fully realized our sentiments when they say "no branch of education at present evoke greater public interest than technical and industrial instruction." We may add to it Agricultural education.

University Education

I do not think we can support the idea of converting into a University with power to confer degrees every College which has shown the capacity of

attracting students from a distance and has attained a certain standard of efficiency. Think of our old tols, how they lost their dignity by the improper use of such powers. Prejudices and prepossessions do not occupy a very insignificant place in human mind. Besides, these local Universities will be dependent upon the opinions of local officials and influenced by them.

Institute for Oriental Studies

The proposal for the foundation of one institution for "scholars working in different branches of the kindred subjects which comprise Orientalia" is admirable. If Pundits and Moulvies would work side by side, exchange between them the thoughts of the ancient Masters and discuss their adaptability to modern circumstances, it would go a great way to promote love and good-will between Hindus and Mahomedans.

The Dacca University Scheme

Gentlemen, I will now run through the Dacca University Scheme and here, with your permission, I will quote, where necessary, from what I had occasion to say lately on the subject. Our acknowledgements are due to Government for the earnestness with which they have taken up the idea

of founding a teaching and residential university in this city, and also the members of the University Committee who have thought and worked so hard to elaborate this scheme.

I would by all means have an Agricultural College in fertile tract of the country, where the people are mainly agricultural.

I would not have a separate department of Islamic Studies. I fully recognise the value of such studies. There should be arrangements for Sanskrit Studies also, and I would put both the courses among the optional subjects in the Arts Course. Forming isolated classes in separate departments, the students of such studies would not have the same general culture suited to the times as other graduates and would further be deprived of the benefits of the corporate life of the whole University. The status proposed for B. I. and M. I. degrees would create general dissatisfaction and discontent. These degrees would never in public estimation carry the same weight as B. A. and M. A.

My opinion is as strong against the foundation of a separate Muhammadan College. Such separation would go against the unification of ideals, promotion of healthy intercourse and general improvement of the two largest sections of our society and create a

cleavage pernicious alike to the true interests of the rulers and the ruled.

I rejoice over the very strong and influential protest that has been made by Dr. Rashbehari Ghosh, and such eminent associations of Zamindars as 'the British Indian Association' and 'the Bengal Land-holders' Association' against the establishment of a college for the well-to-do classes. This country is already too much caste-ridden. Nothing should be done which would strengthen the barriers between class and class which have contributed so much to the downfall of India. If the Prince of Wales does not feel it derogatory to prosecute his studies in the Magdalene College, Oxford, I cannot imagine why the sons of well-to-do classes should hesitate to join our colleges and premium should be given to vanity, of all, in Educational Institutions.

I pray that no steps be taken to mar the dignity of my mother-tongue. I quite approve of the idea of adding to the stock of Bengali Literature from Persian or Arabic sources, but nothing should be introduced which would collide with the genius of that language which is essentially Sanskritic.

As to the staff, the spirit of racial distinction would be a great damper to the men of what is called the Provincial Service and a stumbling-block to the success of the University.

On the question of residence and discipline, I fear, arrangements are proposed for too rigid control and too close supervision. Locks and bars are foreign to our country. In ancient times, the youths of India resided with their teachers, they lived in hostels which were true to the real meaning of the word—they had nothing to pay. No locks and bars were used. Discipline with locks and bars comes very near to prison discipline and too much restraint and patriarchal kindness are apt to work the other way. Love and affection with a due allowance for freedom will achieve the end aimed at and not fear and repression. The advice given by the eminent Professor of America Dr. Stanley Hall seems to be very opposite in consideration of what human nature is like. He says—

Freedom is the vital breath of student life. The sense of personal liberty is absolutely indispensable for moral maturity, and just as truth cannot be found without the possibility of error, so the “*posse non peccare*” precedes the “*non posse peccare*”, and professors must make a broad application of the rule “*abusus non tollit usum*.”

As regards the administration of the University I was at first inclined to think that officials would necessarily predominate in the Convocation, but now, considering that there is a very large number of

educated men who take a lively interest in educational matters, I do not see why non-officials should not form the majority. The members of the Council should all be elected by the Convocation. The members of the Syndicate of the Calcutta University who are all elected have worked to the satisfaction of both Government and the people. There is no reason why the Council of the Dacca University, if the members are all elected, should not be as efficient. The necessity for special representation of Mahommedans has not been proved. If we consider their phenomenal advance during these few years, I do not find any reason why they should press for such representation.

Local Self-Government

It was more than a quarter of a century ago that the principle of Local Self-Government was introduced into the Municipalities of mofussil towns and the District Boards. It has had a fair trial in the Municipalities, but in the District Boards it has not had more than a faint recognition. There is not a majority of elected members in these Boards. Out of 509 members only 210 are elected. Government have been satisfied with the administration of most of our Municipalities and have been decorating some of their Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen. Is it not

time that the District Boards should now be given a fair chance to show if with elected Chairmen they can also acquit themselves as creditably as the Municipalities ? Is it not time that the majority should be formed by elected members as was suggested by the Decentralization Commission ? As at present constituted, they are wanting in life and vigour. What that sainted soul, the Marquis of Ripon said, more than thirty years ago, holds good even to-day in reference to these bodies. He said—“So long as the Chief Executive Officers are, as a matter of course, Chairmen of the Municipalities and District Committees there is little chance of these committees affording any effective training to their members in the management of local affairs or of the non-official members taking any real interest in the local business.” And he added—“The non-official members must be made to feel that real power is placed in their hands.” Even after such a lapse of time, the non-official members do not feel that real power is in their hands. Is it not time that steps should be taken to free them from the tutelage of the Collector ? But there is the objection of the Decentralization Commission which does not approve of the removal of the Collector from the Chairmanship of the District Board as that would “dissociate him from the general interest of the district.” Let

him have the same control as he has on the Municipalities. That would surely put him in touch with them and the nominated members would also be a connecting link between him and the Board.

The Local Boards should also be made comparatively independent. They are now altogether under the thumb of the District Boards. Their budget and even the proceedings of all their meetings have to be submitted to the District Boards for sanction. Evidently the recommendation of the Decentralization Commission on their behalf have not yet been adopted. It is because they are no bodies that electors do not feel interested in exercising their right of election.

I am of opinion that the village organizations should also be placed on an autonomous basis. I know that the wishes of the people are consulted by officials in forming 'Panchayets' but that is not sufficient. Those appointed do not feel that they owe their position to the suffrage of the people and the villagers do not feel that they have the rights of electors and the claims of constituents on their representatives. It is urged by some that the principle of election is an exotic and is against our grain and it would take a long time before it could be assimilated. But the history of the village committees clearly show that the underlying principle

was at work from time immemorial. We also in our boyhood used to see the election of the principal men of the village to decide disputes, to superintend local works and to administer the affairs of the village generally, although the election took place by tacit consent without the intervention of any official.

It seems the system of voting was not altogether unknown to the people of our country. I find a clear-cut definite system of voting by ballot enjoyed by the great Buddha about two thousand and five hundred years ago. Addressing the 'Bhikshus' he says—

"I direct you, O 'Bhikshus', to decide such cases by 'Yebhuyasika'—the vote of the majority. You will appoint as the distributor of 'Salaka' (a slip of wood used as a voting ticket) a 'Bhikshu' who possesses these five qualities: (1) that he is not capricious; (2) that he is not led astray by ill feeling; (3) or by affection; (4) or by fear; (5) that he is discriminating about votes properly given and not given."

The 'salakagahapaka' was the ticket-issuer and the 'Bhikshus' voted by 'salaka', a sort of ballot.

I do not pretend to say that such a system was popular, but it is not unlikely that the Buddhist kings adopted it in certain departments of their administration.

I must say that the District Boards have suffered

much from inadequacy of funds in discharging their legitimate duties. It is cheering to observe that the Finance Member has been pleased to purpose an assignment of 25 lakhs to the Local Government so that they may forego the amounts, which, at present is appropriated for Provincial use from the Public Works cess.

Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson

I take this opportunity of stating that Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson, whose term of office is about to end, has been tried and found to be a sincere friend of India. He has invariably tried to foster education, sanitation, Local Self-Government and other means of public welfare. "It is he," as the 'Indian World' says, "who has not only saved the ship of the State from absolute wreck on financial rocks, but has also exercised all his influence in moderating Anglo-Indian extremism which finds its echo in the cabinet of the Viceroy." This is high praise and is well-founded and, I believe, I give expression to the feeling of everybody present here when I say that it is our fervent prayer to His Gracious Majesty the King-Emperor that he should be retained in his position for another term for the good of his Indian subjects.

Sanitation, Drainage and Water-supply

Now, a word about Sanitation, Drainage and Water-supply. How much I rejoice that these subjects have attracted the attention of our Governor and his Councillors and how much we are on that account, indebted to them. These questions are more important than even the question of Education. Life first, Education next. I presume, I may say that almost the whole of Bengal is seething with malaria and it is painfully feeling the want of drinking water. The villages wear an aspect which indicates, to use one of our own significant expressions, that 'Lakshmi' has departed from them for good. Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson has very kindly proposed giving 1½ crores from the surplus for urban sanitation. It will do good to only 7 per cent. of the population, who can, to a certain extent, take care of themselves. We wish a still large amount had been allotted for rural sanitation. I congratulate Lord Carmichael on his efforts to reclaim the rural areas and on the excellent suggestion "that the resources of the District Boards might be more usefully applied in improving the existing sources of water supply than in the construction of a few scattered wells and tanks", and I hope I may be permitted to submit that improvement, in the economic condition of the people is even more important in fighting with

malarial fever and other diseases to which they fall victims so easily. I would invite His Excellency's attention and yours to the following opinion of such an authoritative body as the Italian Malaria Commission. I am quoting it from the 'Amrita Bazar Patrika' to which we are very sincerely thankful for all that it has been doing in the cause of sanitation. The Commission say—"Side by side with the hygienic treatment of the soil and of the human being, measures must be taken to increase the resistance of the healthy organism to the disease economic misery and physical wretchedness which as its child open the way of infection. In general, good feeding, a healthy dwelling, sufficient sleep, physical well-being, are the most favourable conditions for the preservation of man from malaria as well as other diseases.

Religious Ministration in jails

I now come to a subject on which I have been feeling very strongly for some years—the 'necessity of religious ministration to convicts. As far as I know there are such arrangements in almost all countries of the world. There can be no doubt that, generally, punishments are meant as a deterrent as well as a means for reformation. The promiscuous association of all sorts of criminals without a

single word about God and the blessings of a good life in this world and the next uttered to them can surely never improve their character. The old hardened criminals very often make use of their opportunities to boast of, what they think, their own marvellous feats of evil-doing and teach the younger offenders the art of emulating them. I heartily appreciate the appointment of a committee for the consideration of measures for the protection of Juvenile offenders. I hope along with the establishment of industrial schools and other measures provision would be made for religious and moral training also. But it is not only juvenile prisoners, other prisoners also claim the attention of Government for instituting means which would help them to amend their character. It will not do to say that most of them are beyond reclamation. On my suggestion, one of our most popular Magistrates requested a noted preacher of Islam to deliver a religious address to the Mussulman convicts of a certain jail. The effect was wonderful. Even the most confirmed and inveterate criminals, who seemed impervious to any good instructions, were moved to tears. But the Magistrate was taken to task for such an indiscreet act not provided for in the Jail Code. Government make arrangement for religious ministration to European Christian convicts.

I do not understand why it should not be done for other convicts as well. It might be urged that the differences of sects are an insuperable bar, but they could be addressed on the line of universal truths or ministers of different persuasions might be employed for men of their respective creeds. Discourses on the lives of saints of all creeds, especially of those who had lapses in the beginning of their careers but ended like angels, would be immensely beneficial.

Our Responsibilities and Duties

Ladies and Gentlemen, now, let us think of our own responsibilities and duties. Here are our brothers and sisters—who are sometimes called the submerged or the depressed classes—names that are neither creditable to them nor to us—nevertheless, our brothers and sisters—steeped in ignorance and superstition, selfish narrowness and dense bigotry—not a single ray to illumine their souls, blind alike to the glories of the earth and the blessings of Heaven, and here are others who have a smattering of knowledge, but no sense of self-respect, not ashamed to resort to questionable practices for self and always grumbling and discontented with themselves; here are men, thousands and thousands, who have not wherewith to procure two meals a day, yet are besotted with drink, or stupefied with opium or crazed.

with the fumes of 'ganja, chandu' and 'charus' or bestialised by all these taken together ; and many, many immersed in impurity, wallowing in filth with none to rescue them from the grip of sensuality ; here are men and women who succumb to Cholera, Small-pox, and other diseases with no doctor to treat them, no benevolent neighbour to cheer them ; here are again hundreds of thousands of sallow shrivelled figures stricken with Malaria, dying by inches, with no power of resistance in their bodies, who are denied even the luxury of drinking pure water and to whom death by cholera would be a relief ; here are others—thousands of what you all the 'bhadrolog' class sinking beneath the burden of their want and woe, very nearly starving and pining away, who will not whisper even to the winds of the state they are in, yet will not take to manual work or agricultural labour out of a false sense of honour and there are men who have land or other means of subsistence but do not know how to utilise them or preserve and improve them—quite an invertebrate body of people ignorant and inane and who, when they can turn a penny do not know how to save it ; and there are those whose occupation is gone, whose craft has gone to foreign hands and who are now on the verge of starvation. Add to these the orphans who have no parents to take care of them, who are like floating

spars of a wreck in the mid-ocean—sport of the winds and the waves, of mere chance with none to feed them and clothe them, none to steer them aright ; and the thousands of helpless widows ; and there are men who have not even the bare means of subsistence but who will spend their last farthing in ruinous litigation, who are mad after law suits and who would borrow desperately as long as loans are procurable to teach their neighbours, as they call it, a lesson, until they run through their fortunes and are reduced almost to the miserable position of the beggars in the street ; and is it not our remissness in not making arrangements for arbitration in the villages that is, to a great extent, responsible for this mania of litigation ?

Lastly, consider the dire poverty of the country with its exhaustion and the insanitary condition of our villages. I will not mention the various social evils which are peculiar to different communities, to different sections of our society. When I think of the numerous evils that are sucking the very heart's blood of my own motherland, and of the poverty of the teeming millions in this land of plenty, I hang my head in shame and feel in my heart of heart that I have lived my life in vain.

Now, Ladies and Gentlemen, will you not open your purse-strings, devote your energies, consecrate

your very lives to ameliorate these evils—to rescue our own brothers and sisters from the depths of poverty and ignorance and the clutches of vice and folly ? If you will, there are hundreds to follow you. We are not lost beyond hope of recovery.

Signs of Life

I have already said that life is not extinct. The spark is still there. We have not altogether forgotten to be great and good. In literary and scientific fields, on the cricket and the foot-ball grounds, at the Bar, on the Bench, in practical work of administration—have we not men who have acquitted themselves with credit to themselves and the race they belong to ? Although Messrs Macpherson and Co. are crying themselves hoarse over our lack of energy and organising capabilities and guiding power, have we not seen Bengalees at the helm of first class Native States steering the ship of the State gloriously ? Have they not, when opportunities were given them, proved to be excellent District Officers ? During times of stress and strain, the manner in which recently thousands of our young men organised themselves into bands for quiet, good work which took the fancy of even our adversaries—is not that something on which we may congratulate ourselves ?

The manner in which our young men offered help to hundreds of thousands of pilgrims during the Ardhodaya Yoga, the Churamani Yoga, and during Brahmaputra Snan, which extorted the unstinted praise even from those Anglo-Indian papers who are very chary in offering us our due, gave unmistakable proofs of their energy and organising capacity. The heart was there and the powers were there. There are still organisations of young men who take upon themselves to make time to tend the sick, to house the houseless, and to do the last ceremony to the friendless dead. One cannot but admire the brio, the cheerfulness and steadiness which these Young Samaritans do their noble work. I shall never forget how magnificently my friends of about two hundred societies in my district discharged their duties during the distress of 1906 and during the very active days of our Swadeshi work. They worked as smoothly as a machine and I might almost say that there was not a screw loose anywhere. Many of them excavated tanks with their own hands for collecting money to relieve the poor, many of them volunteered themselves to serve as 'Chowkidars' and kept up shouting at night to scare away thieves and 'bad-mashes' who multiply during seasons of such scarcity. Some of them really caught some thieves and handed them over to the Police. I shall never

forget how some of them, out of regard for the tender susceptibilities of respectable families who were feeling the pinch dreadfully and yet would not for their lives divulge it to their neighbours, arranged to slip unto them their doles in the dark of the night. I know of two villages, where the residents, most of them Brahmins, flung to the winds their false sense of dignity and came down to construct roads with their own hands—one about a mile long and a half. I shall never forget how the elixir of a new life percolated to the lowest strata of our society—how both Hindus and Mussalmans of even the humblest cultivating class were inspired to compose in their own dialect songs of the awakening which they went about singing from village to village, moving the heart of even the most apathetic to feel and worship our common Mother, how the boatmen caught the spirit and lustily sang those songs to refresh themselves after the toil of the day. Such singing parties if properly guided would, I believe, be prodigiously effective in helping on our work of reform. I could cite a thousand and one instances to show the intelligence and capacity of our people for organised action.

I have heard with very great delight that there was similar work done in this district and some other districts also.

Verily, life is not extinct. The Indian heart, Hindu as well as Mussalman, has always throbbed quick in the name of Religion. Think of the numerous lavish endowments for the erection of temples and mosques, feeding the 'sadhus' and 'faquirs', creation of seats of ancient learning, construction of 'dharmaśālas', and institution of seats of ancient learning, and institution of 'śādhavratas, chhatras' and 'cheragis'. Think of the enthusiasm with which our countrymen make their pilgrimages, how sometimes the rich forget their riches, deny themselves all worldly enjoyments, live like the poorest of the poor and wearily trudge on to inaccessible shrines. Think of the multitude of men and women who visit Puri, Benares or Vrindaban or Mecca and Medina or assemble during bathing Yogas and are inundated with joy on the completion of their pilgrimages. Only a portion of this enthusiasm has to be directed to the necessities of the day. I have already cited some instances which betoken the diversion. The princely gifts of our wealthy noblemen and gentlemen to the cause of modern education and organised relief of suffering humanity, the ready response I had in my call for help to men of my district during distress, for which I and they are overwhelmed with gratitude—O, the warmth with which my appeal was received ! A

coolie sent me rupees four, a maidservant her whole month's pay ;—the self-sacrificing labours of men like my friends of the National College and of the Daulatpur Academy—following in the footsteps of the members of the Fergusson College ; the high-souled endeavours of the gentlemen of the Brahmacharyasram of Bolpur ; and of those, who are devotedly working here at Dacca, in Calcutta and elsewhere for helpless widows and orphans and the hitherto neglected class of society—what do these show ? Outside Bengal the admirable educational and social work of the Arya Samaj—the philanthropic services of the Servants of India Society—and those of the Ramkrishna Mission throughout India—what do these show ? The spirit of sacrifice and devotion has not left the land, it is adapting itself to our present-day requirements, and the power of working out your beneficent plans is with us. Now, Gentlemen, it is for you, as leaders of the people, to come forward and help us. You have to provide food for those who cannot work, to give to those who can, to open out vocations to those who do not know what to do with themselves, to help on agricultural and indigenous industrial enterprise, to utilise the resources of the country, to promote the Swadeshi spirit, to devise means for good water-supply and drainage, to give medical relief to the sick, to spread

ideas of sanitation all round, to establish schools of different grades for general education of our men and women and for agricultural and industrial education, to give our youth physical, moral and religious training, to work in the cause of temperance, to make arrangements for arbitration in almost every village if possible, to improve the morals of our society, to raise in the social scale those who have been so long neglected, and to check effectively the growing tendency to be irreligious and unscrupulous. The list is not complete, yet we have no reason to despair. Evils are closely strung together and when one is shoved others are very often shoved along with it. If we will only bestir ourselves we shall be surprised to see what we can achieve.

Ways and Means

Money is needed, but we should have enough of it if we could but adopt our time-honoured principle of Plain Living and High Thinking. Bring to your mind the simplicity of habits of Indians of olden times and the loftiness of their thoughts. I am afraid, we are fast drifting into "High Living and Plain Thinking" and forgetting the sage saying :—

“Man wants but little here below,

Nor wants that little long.”

Even our students, I am sorry to say, are being affected by morbid notions roused by the glamour of wealth and fashion. It is the duty of our teachers to drive these out and put, instead, sane and healthy ideas into their heads. The materialistic tendency must be checked with a high hand. It is so insidious in its working, you will yourself be surprised at the wants you have created in seeking what you call your comfort. I have heard of a gentleman who lives on only about a hundred rupees a month and spends the rest of his monthly income—six or seven hundred rupees, on doing good to others. What a noble example to us ! There is also in us a craze for being extravagant in 'Sradhas' and other ceremonies. Whether it is for show or conformance to old customs it should by all means be deprecated. We have to adapt ourselves to altered circumstances. All honour to the gentleman, who had estimated the cost of the 'Sradh' of his brother's wife for Rs. 160, performed the ceremony within 60—and sent me the hundred for feeding starving people in her name with prayers for her well-being in the other world. Would that such examples should multiply. If in performing 'Sradhs' the cost of the ceremony itself were minimised and permanent funds, however small created for public good and perpetuation of the

names of the parents, what a vast amount of good could be done to the country! If other occasions also were seized for the creation of such funds, our country would be overspread with a net work of benevolent organisations. I would not care at all for the amount given by a particular individual. A rupee a year to be given away for some beneficent purpose in the name of the father, or the mother would be exceedingly welcome. Let the multi-millionaire create his fund with his millions and let the poor man's mite go to create his. Many a little makes a mickle. The Paisa Fund of the Maharastra has worked wonders. The glass works of Talegaon have been started and maintained by this fund and the now defunct National college of that place also came out of it. Wherever you go in that part of the Deccan, you will find a small box presented to you into which you are requested to throw anything you like, even only a pice, if you please. I do not see why Bengal should not have her Paisa Fund too.

Foundation of Societies

In order that such funds may be created and properly managed, I would establish a Society in each district, have it registered according to law, so that people might have no hesitation in making

the Governing bodies of such societies trustees of their funds. These societies might gradually take up all the sorts of work I have referred to, in the first instance dealing only with several, there might be two or three societies which would divide many of the duties between them or a central society may be established with branches in every district, but that would, I fear, induce a dull uniformity and impose restraint and loss of freedom. I would prefer independent societies which might work according to the needs of each district and submit their reports at the end of every year to this Conference. This would stimulate our energies and give us the advantage of comparing notes. For obvious reasons these societies must be kept distinct from those which would take up criticism of measures of Government and Political agitation.

When such societies are formed, I am sure many rich men will come forward with endowments for beneficent purposes ; there are childless wealthy men who, instead of adopting sons, would prefer making the country their heirs. Such men would gladly execute deeds of gift in favour of such societies. I know that there is enough of desultory charity in the land. I expect it would be organised and given an effective shape conducive to the welfare of the whole community. Loose rambling

charity can never stimulate and kindle the imagination or be as effective as organised charity. Our Mussalman brothers have an excellent principle enjoined by their 'Shastras.' Every man should pay to the poor one-fortieth of what he earns. This gift is called 'Zakat'. It is not thought of as a mere gift, it is recognised by them as a satisfaction of the claim the poor have upon them. An admirable idea! We may with advantage adopt this system and drop in our 'Zakat' into the funds of these societies. I am sanguine money will not be wanting. A good cause has always the blessings of the Most High on it.

But there is something more than money that is needed—the heart for such work. I have already said that we have our young men who have the heart for it and that there are such has been proved to the hilt. Only they need guidance and training and you have to give them work.

There is no doubt that poverty and family responsibilities stand in the way of many, but you could, I am confident, find a large number, a very large number, who would work for bare subsistence-allowance and rough it out for the sake of the country. There is a feeling growing every day against dilettante patriotism and if we will only set about in earnest, hands will not be wanting to carry

out our schemes of self-reliant activity for the amelioration of the condition we are in ; and if, all at once, we shall not have competent men for all the purposes chalked out before us, they will be coming in a short time. Education, sanitation, medical relief, arbitration, temperance, improvement of agriculture, Swadeshi enterprise,—every department will have its men willing and painstaking.

Conclusion

Let us then, Fellow-delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen, set the ball rolling—even to-day—a glorious and an auspicious day. But yesterday was celebrated the sanctified memory of a dead which exhibited to the world the strength and the power that is in love which embraces all mankind and presses to its bosom even publicans and sinners, and to-day is sacred in the name of Sreekrishna, the Expounder of the Bhagabadgita which places before you the sublimest ideal of loving work for all created beings ; and it is a day particularly hallowed in the annals of Bengal, a day that flung wide open the flood-gates of Love and Faith and Hope, a red-letter day in the history of the world, the birthday of Sri Chaitanya who is acknowledged to be an incarnation of Love, who knew no difference between Hindus and Mahomedans, between

Brahmanas and Chandalas, who rose above all sects & creeds, whose love like the rays of the sun, shone alike on princes' palaces and poor men's cottages. In the name of Jesus Christ, of Sri Krishna, of Sri Chaitanya with the halos of their brows illumining the very depths of our souls and dispelling all the gloom and darkness of narrowness and selfishness that have accumulated therein, let us begin our work of light and love even to-day and Heaven's light be our guide.

May the blessing of the ancient 'Rishi' in the last 'Rik' of 'Rigveda' be with you :—

May your purposes be one

May your hearts be one,

May your minds be one,

So that you may be agreeably associated with each other (in your sacred mission).

Vandemataram.

The Conference then proceeded to form the Subjects Committee to draft the resolutions to be adopted in the Conference next day. Great enthusiasm prevailed.

Second Day's Proceedings

The Provincial Conference resumed on the 23rd March amidst shouts of 'Bande Mataram' from the audience, which filled the pandal to the full. The President proposed to convey sincere and strong congratulations by wire to Mr Rasul on the all-India Moslem League for adopting a resolution for Self-Government on the lines adopted by the Conference.

The President then moved the first resolution, expressing horror and abhorrence at the Delhi outrage.

The second resolution conveyed an expression of gratitude to the Government for removing the punitive police.

The third resolution recommended the adoption of measures to elevate backward sections.

The fourth resolution was concerning the political ideal of the people being Self-Government.

After this, a national song by D. L. Roy was sung.

The fifth resolution urged the people to support the Swadeshi movement even at a sacrifice. This was moved by Mr. Surendranath Sen. He said :— Since the initiation at Swadeshi the enthusiasm has much abated, and though something has been done, much yet remains to be done for the economical salvation of this country. There was

once necessity for boycott, but it has gone off with the re-union of Bengal; and the King Emperor has been given the nation's homage of love and gratitude. But so long as there is poverty and misery in this country Swadeshi should not be suffered to go out of the country.

The resolution was then seconded by Babu Bipinbihari Bhattacharya and was unanimously adopted.

The sixth resolution was regarding police reform urging that the heads of the District police should be men who would command confidence, and that evidence of general repute like that in section 110 C. P. C. should be used regarding police officers. The resolution was moved by Mr. E. P. Ghosh and Babu Bishnupada Chatterji in seconding it introduced some interesting stories and quoted some instances which in a very pleasant way brought the whole subject home to the audience.

The seventh resolution relating to the territorial redistribution with a view to place the entire Bengali speaking population under one and the same administration was moved by Mr. B. K. Lahiri who said :—
“It is simply a very just and legitimate and earnest desire of the whole Bengali-speaking people and is quite in keeping with the very Despatch upon the strength of which the partition has been set aside.”

The President then moved the eighth resolution concerning serious reports about treatment of political prisoners in jail.

The ninth resolution was in connection with the opening up of some new railway lines from Dacca to Archa, etc.

The tenth resolution recommended simultaneous examination in India for Civil Service. It was moved by Mr. Trailokyanath Bose and seconded by Mr. J. Chaudhuri. The demand was said to be only just and fair and ought to be granted in view of Her Majesty the Queen's Proclamation.

The eleventh resolution was with regard to the separation of the Judicial and Executive functions and was proposed by Mr. B. N. Basu and seconded and supported by several gentlemen. It was said to be a matter of supreme importance and the speakers discussed the matter with great enthusiasm.

The twelfth resolution was that the Judiciary should be recruited mainly from the Bar. It was moved by Babu Purnachandra Maitra and supported by several gentlemen.

The thirteenth resolution recommended that appointments in the Provincial Executive Service should be mainly by competitive tests.

The fourteenth resolution was regarding

sanitation and water-supply which were spoken of as matters of supreme importance.

It was proposed by Babu Gobindachandra Bhowal and seconded by Kabiraj Jaminiranjan Sen of 51 Sukea Street.

In seconding the resolution of Sanitation Kabiraj Jaminiranjan Sen Kavyatirtha delivered a neat little speech in Bengali. He drew a lurid contrast between the condition of villages in the past and that of the present moment. He narrated the health and mirth that had reigned in the former times and deplored the innumerable diseases such as malaria, dyspepsia etc., that were sapping the very vitals of the present rural population. He quoted chapter and verse from 'Charak' and Ayurvedic books to show how thoroughly our ancients propounded the Sanitary laws that find so much favour with the medical men even of the present age. "The Charak", the speaker said, "lays down elaborately the rules to be observed for the preservation of our health and points out the means for the supply of pure drinking water and the supreme importance of keeping the air we breathe fresh from any impurity. The mice and rats were, even in that distant age, condemned as most effective carriers of the germs of diseases, and means were suggested for their annihilation. In those days excavation of tanks

was looked upon as a virtue people hankered after practising. Now, alas ! the villages, neglected and isolated, are the permanent homes of unspeakable miseries and heart-rending griefs." The speaker in conclusion made a fervent appeal to direct our energies to the sacred task of alleviating these sufferings, for, he said, the Indian nation, like all other nations, lives in villages and we must save the villages from threatened extinction if we want to save the nation.

The President then moved a resolution regarding the improvement of water-ways.

The sixteenth resolution was about dacoities and their prevention. Babu Manomohon Neogi, in moving the resolution, expressed abhorrence and urged a sufficient supply of fire-arms to the people and to train them to use them. It was seconded by several gentlemen and carried.

The seventeenth resolution was about the expansion of local Self-Government. It was said that official control in these and specially in the District Boards should be altogether withdrawn to make local Self-Government worth the name.

The eighteenth resolution was about Council Regulations. It was proposed by Mr. Chakravarti. Seconding the resolution Babu Sasankajiban Ray, Vakil, High Court, gave the following speech :

“Mr. President, brother delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

“The resolution that I have been called upon to second relates to the revision of the Council Regulations. The Reform Scheme of Lord Morley as contained in the Despatch of 27th November, 1908, was formulated with the object of associating the people of India with the Government, through the expansion of the Legislative Councils and the extension of their function to the discussion of administrative questions. With a view to meet the just claims of the various sections of the people in the matter of representation of their respective interests on the Local and the Supreme Councils, Lord Morley recommended in the said despatch, the adoption of a system of mixed Electoral Colleges. But, unfortunately, the Government of India did not accept the suggestion of Lord Morley and have introduced the pernicious system of communal representation by means of separate electorates. The introduction of this novel principle has created division where there was none and has seriously hampered the development of national life in this country. This schismatic policy of the Government has struck a decisive blow at the growth of Parliamentary Institutions in India and is largely responsible for the legitimate discontent that

prevails throughout the country. It is high time that the Government should abrogate this policy in the best interests of the rulers and the ruled as well.

“Gentlemen, the resolution of the Government of India dated the 16th November, 1909 has laid down their policy in the matter of Council Regulations which has not been modified by the recent revision necessitated by the territorial re-distribution. The fifth paragraph of the said resolution runs thus :—

“ ‘Special provision has been made for representation of the professional classes, the landholders, the Muhammadans, European commerce and Indian commerce. The first of these interests will be represented on the Governor-General’s Council by the members elected by the Provincial Legislative Councils and by the District Councils and Municipal Committees in the Central Provinces ; and on the Provincial Councils by the representatives of the District Boards, the Municipalities, the Corporations of the Presidency towns and the Universities. The others will be represented upon all the Councils by members elected by special electorates or nominated under an express provision of the Regulations.’ ”

“For the purpose of representation on the Councils the population of the country have been divided by the Government into five classes. Four

of these classes, viz., the Landholders, the Mahomedans, European commerce and Indian commerce have been given separate and special electorates for their representation on both the Provincial and Imperial Councils. But so far as the professional classes are concerned, which comprise the educated middle class community, they are intended to have a reversed constituency in the shape of the Local Councils for returning their representatives to the Supreme Council. But unfortunately for us, the Government of India, through an oversight—either intentional or accidental have not framed any specific regulation to give effect to their declared intention in this respect. The result has been that the educated community cannot command their reserved seats on the Imperial Council in the absence of any regulation preventing the other four classes from contesting them. The defeat of our veteran leader Babu Bhupendranath Basu in the recent Imperial Council Election owing to the combination of a Zamindar and a Mahomedan candidate, has conclusively proved the necessity for an express regulation to safeguard the rights of the professional classes in this matter.

“Now, gentlemen, as for the representation of the educated community on the Local Council, the memorable resolution of the Government of India

has expressly reserved the Municipalities and the District Boards as the special constituencies for the purpose. But no definite Regulation having been framed by the Government to give effect to their intention many of these seats reserved for the representatives of the Local Bodies are ordinarily captured by the members of the other four classes. Gentlemen, the recent election has shown the real state of affairs in this respect. Our esteemed countryman Mr. J. Chaudhuri stood as a candidate for election to the Local Council from the District Boards of the Rajshahi Division. But he has been defeated by a member of the landholding class, who are not satisfied even with a special electorate. The system of double representation by means of separate and general electorates secured to some particular sections of the people has operated to the prejudice of the educated classes, who are largely instrumental in bringing into existence the Reformed Councils. Gentlemen, the position of the educated classes has therefore become impossible. Shall we submit to the trampling down of our representation of the Councils of the realm? (Cries of no, no.) Gentlemen, I appeal to you with all the earnestness that I can command to organise an agitation throughout the country for the modification of the Council Regulations.

Now, gentlemen, as regards the choice of the Municipalities and the District Boards in the matter of election, it is extremely limited by reason of the various disqualifications imposed upon the members of the educated classes. The service qualification, which requires that a candidate from the Municipalities and the District Boards must have served on them for a period of 3 years prevents our best men being returned to the Council. With due deference to the moffusil leaders, many of whom possess the service qualification, I venture to say that there are a number of leading men in the country, who, though they have not served on the local bodies, are, still, by education, political training, independence of character and position eminently qualified to represent the people on the Local Council. It is incumbent upon us to agitate for the repeal of the unjust regulations that interfere with the positive rights of the people in the matter of returning their best men to the Legislative Councils of the country.

Gentlemen, we are living in stirring times. The Self-Governing members of the British Empire are being drawn into an Imperial Federation and are going to have an effective voice in controlling the Imperial policy of the Empire. We, Indians, refuse to remain as a mere subject population deprived of the rights of citizenship and subservient to the

Imperial policy of Great Britain in Asia and other parts of the world. The national consciousness of the people of India has been roused after the torpor of ages and the ideal of autonomous Self-Government under the aegis of the British Crown has dawned upon the public mind. As the first step towards the realisation of this ideal we want to have the Legislative Councils so formed as to approximate the pattern of Parliamentary institutions. I therefore appeal to you to lose no time in organising a vast agitation in the country for the purpose and to carry it on to a successful termination.

“With these words, gentlemen, I have great pleasure in seconding this Resolution, which has been moved by the Hon’ble Mr. B. Chakravarti.”

The Conference then adjourned for half an hour, after which Moulvi Wazedate Ahmed moved the nineteenth resolution, urging Hindus and Mahomedans to buy Turkish Bonds and make united efforts to bring about union between Hindus and Mahomedans. It was strongly and eloquently supported by several Hindu and Mahomedan gentlemen including Mr. B. N. Basu, who proposed to purchase at least ten Bonds and further proposed starting an organisation through the Red Crescent Society for the sale of Turkish Bonds about which, it was said that there was absolutely no risk or

danger. The proposal was adopted with great enthusiasm.

Although thirty-four resolutions were passed, including those relative to removing disabilities of Mukhtears under the present Criminal Procedure Code and the numerous objectionable elements in the Dacca University Scheme, etc.

Babu Akhilchandra Datta, on behalf of the Tipperah people, invited the Provincial Conference for the next year to Comilla. The proposal was received with great acclamation and after this the Conference dissolved after the usual thanks-giving and a song amidst the deafening shouts of 'Bande Mataram'.

Resolutions

I

Delhi Outrage

That this Conference places on record its deep sense of horror and abhorrence at the dastardly outrage on His Excellency The Viceroy at Delhi and expresses its sincere satisfaction at His Excellency's recovery.

(From the Chair)

II

Punitive Police

That this Conference expresses its gratitude to the Government of His Excellency Lord Carmichael for removing the punitive police force from certain areas in the Munsiganj and Madaripur Sub-Divisions.

(From the Chair)

III

Elevation of Backward Sections

That this Conference earnestly urges the people to adopt measures for the amelioration of the condition of the backward sections of the community.

(From the Chair)

IV

Self-Government

That this Conference places on record that the political ideal of the people of this country is Self-Government as it obtains in the Self-Governing Colonies of the British Empire.

(From the Chair)

V

Swadesi

That this Conference accords its most cordial support to the Swadesi movement, and calls upon the people to labour for its success, to promote the growth of indigenous industries, and to use Swadesi articles, as far as practicable, even at a sacrifice.

Proposed by—Babu Surendranath Sen (Barisal).

Seconded by—Babu Bipinbihari Bhattacharya
(Faridpur).

VI

Police Reforms

That in the opinion of this Conference the heads of the District Police should be men of such standing as to command the confidence of the people, that in dealing with police officers evidence of general character as in the case of proceedings against private individuals under Section 110 of the Criminal Procedure Code, be taken into consideration and that police Sub-Inspectors and Inspectors, when not appointed by promotion should be recruited by competitive tests from among candidates possessed of character and having a good social status.

Proposed by—Mr. E. P. Ghosh.

Seconded by—Mr. Bishnupada Chatterjee.

VII

Territorial Redistribution

That this Conference expresses its sense of disappointment at the refusal of the Government to accede to the wishes of the people in respect of the question of Territorial Redistribution and urges that with a view to place the entire Bengali-speaking population under one and the same administration, the districts of Sylhet, Goalpara and a portion of

Santhal Parganas, Manbhum together with the Dhalbhum Pargana of District Singbhum, and the part of the District of Purnia to the east of the Mahanadi river, be restored to the Presidency of Bengal.

Proposed by—Mr. B. K. Lahiri.

Seconded by—Babu Satischandra Sinha.

VIII

Treatment of Prisoners

That in view of the serious reports relating to the treatment of the prisoners convicted of offence against the State in the jails of India and the Andamans this Conference requests the Government to appoint a Committee consisting of official and non-official members to enquire into the matter.

(From the Chair)

IX

Railway Communication

That with a view to remove the much-felt difficulties of communication between different parts of this Presidency, this Conference strongly urges upon the Government the necessity for the early construction of the following railway lines namely :—

(1) Between Dacca and Archa

(2) Between Mymensingh and Archa via Tangail ;

- (3) Natore to Godagari via Rajsahi ;
- (4) Sara to Sirajgunge via Pabna ;
- (5) Between Bhanga and Faridpur ;
- (6) Between Bhairab and Netrakona ;
- (7) Between Khulna and Bagerhat ;
- (8) Between Rajsahi and Godagari.

Proposed by—Babu Sarat ch. Chakravarti.

Seconded by—Babus Revatisankar Roy and Hemchandra Roy.

X

Simultaneous Examinations

That this Conference records its deliberate opinion that the present modes of recruitment being unfair and unfavourable to the admission of Indians into the Indian Civil Service and other Public Services, a system of simultaneous examinations in England and India in a uniform standard should be introduced and this Conference condemns the idea of any arbitrary rule fixing the proportion between the Europeans and the Indians in the Service which would be opposed to the Statutes of 1833 and of 1870 and the Queen's Proclamation of 1858.

Proposed by—Babu Trailokyanath Bose.

Seconded by—Mr. J. Choudhury.

XI

Separation of Judicial and Executive Functions

That this Conference places on record its sense of

disappointment that notwithstanding the hopes held out by the Government from time to time that Executive and Judicial functions were soon to be separated, no effective steps have yet been taken in that direction and concurring with previous Conference, it urges that immediate steps be taken for it and a scheme of separation to be of any real value must place the Judiciary entirely under the control of the High Court in the matter of appointment, pay, promotion and transfer.

Proposed by—Babu Bhupendranath Bose.

Seconded by—Babu Purnachandra Maitra.

Supported by—Babu Kaliprasanna Chakravarty (Mymensingh), Birajmohan Roy Choudhury (Barisal), Ramanimohan Das (Sylhet), Nagendra kumar Majumdar (Faridpur), Dr. Nepalchandra Roy (Dacca), Mr. Kshitischandra Sen (Chittagong).

XII

Judicial Recruitment

That this Conference is of opinion that the Judiciary should be mainly recruited from the Bar and that steps immediately taken for the appointment of District and Sessions Judges from the ranks of the Bar.

Proposed by—Babu Purnachandra Maitra.

Seconded by—Babu Pareschandra Dasgupta.

Supported by—Babu Basantakumar Majumdar

(Noakhali), Akhilchandra Datta (Tippera),
Hon. Ramanimohan Das (Sylhet).

XIII

Provincial Executive and Judicial Services

That in the opinion of this Conference appointments of the Provincial Executive and Judicial Services should be made mainly by competitive tests.

Proposed by—Babu Rajendranath Banerjee.

Seconded by—Babu Kaminimohan Banerjee.

Amendment to the Resolution

That the XIII Resolution be amended by omitting the words 'and Judicial' and the letter 's' after 'Service'.

Proposed by—Babu B. N. Basu.

Seconded by—Babu Purnachandra Maitra.

XIV

Sanitation and Water-Supply

That this Conference places on record its appreciation of the desire of the Government of Bengal for the improvement of the supply of pure drinking water in rural areas and urges upon people of all classes to co-operate with the Government and the local bodies in the matter.

The Conference urges upon the Government the necessity for the speedy initiation of other measures of sanitary improvement, such as drainage, jungle-clearing, etc.

XV

Water-ways

That the Conference appreciates the desire of the Government to improve the water-ways of the Province and urges the Government to include in the Committee already formed for this purpose some of the non-official leading men of this Presidency.

(From the Chair)

XVI

Dacoities and their Prevention

That this Conference while viewing with horror and alarm the commission of dacoities in the interior of many of the districts of Bengal, respectfully urges upon the Government that the best remedy for the prevention thereof is to supply fire-arms to a sufficient number of people in each village and to train them for the use of the same, and also relax the rules for granting gun-licenses.

Proposed by—Babu Monmohan Neogi.

Seconded by—Babu Sailendrachandra Banerjee.

XVII

Expansion of Local Self-Government

That this Conference expresses its disappointment and regrets at the delay of the Government in taking measures for the expansion of Local Self-Government and suggests the adoption of the following amongst other measures :—

- (a) Making village the unit of Self-Government.
- (b) Constituting the Local Boards on a thoroughly elective basis with elected non-official Chairman, and with independent sources of income and independent functions.
- (c) Forming the District Boards by means of election and giving them powers to elect their Chairman.
- (d) Creating a Local Government Board to supervise and control the working and organisation of the Municipalities, the District and Local Boards.
- (e) Reducing the official element to a minimum.
- (f) Excluding Government officials from eligibility for election.

This Conference expresses its gratefulness to the Government for assigning the whole of the Public Works cess to the District Boards and hope that the Imperial Government will make further grants to augment the resources of local bodies.

Proposed by—Babu Saratchandra Guha.

Seconded by—Babu Narayanchandra Ganguly.

XVIII

Council Regulations.

That this Conference records its sense of disappointment at the results of the recent revision of the Council Regulations and urges the Government

to modify the Regulations with regard to the following points :—

(a) Abolishing the system of communal representation.

(b) Removal of disabilities now imposed on the candidates for election.

(c) Affording facilities for the representation of the educated community by throwing open at least one seat for election by the graduates of the University.

(d) Providing for the direct representation of the people by throwing one seat in each Division to election by a General Electorate formed on the basis of the payment of Income Tax, or local rates or the possession of other qualifications as may be determined upon.

(e) Excluding the nominated members of the Municipalities and the District and Local Boards from participating in the election of members to the Council.

(f) Allowing Municipalities and District and Local Boards greater freedom of choice in the matter of electing members.

(g) Allowing the Finance Committee of the Provincial Legislative Council powers to deal with the whole Financial Statement of the year.

(h) Placing the Chittagong Division on the same footing as the Dacca and the Rajsahi Division.

Proposed by Mr. Chakravarty.

Seconded by Babu Sasankajivan Roy.

Supported by Babu Amulyachandra Datta.

XIX

India and Turkey

That this Conference earnestly urges both the Hindus and Mahomedans to adopt measures if possible, for the purchase of the Turkish Bonds and to make united efforts to bring about the Union between Hindus and Mahomedans.

Proposed by Moulvi Abdul Wazid.

Seconded by Munsii Moinuddin Ahmed.

Supported by : Syed Md. Asraff, Mr. R. K. Das, Babu Saratchandra Chakravarty, Babu Kristadayal Roy, Babu Bhupendranath Basu.

XX

Improvement of Dacca

That this Conference has learnt with great satisfaction that the improvement of the sanitary condition of Dacca by introducing a complete system of under-ground drainage is under contemplation of the Government and desires to point out that the city also requires improvement in the following respects, viz. :

(a) Improvement of the Mitford Hospital.

(b) Opening out of congested quarters by

constructing new and wide thoroughfares, public squares and parks.

(c) Better lighting of streets.

(d) Better watering of the streets by unfiltered water, thus saving the great waste of filtered water.

(e) Canalising the Dolal and Babu Bazar Khals.

Proposed by—Babu Pareschandra Banerjee.

Seconded by—Babu Priyanath Sen.

XXI

Education

That this Conference, while appreciating the desire of the Government to extend and improve education, is of opinion that no such improvement and expansion can be real without introduction of free and compulsory Primary Education. This Conference further protests against the suggestion of transferring the control of affiliated schools from the University to the Education Department.

This Conference is also of opinion that the time has arrived for people all over the country to take up earnestly the question of supplementing existing institutions and the efforts of Government by organising for themselves a system of education comprising primary, secondary, technical and industrial education and urges the people to accord its support to the national system of education.

That the Government of Bengal be requested to appoint a committee consisting of representative Indian gentlemen to draw up a system for the expansion of primary education in Bengal.

Proposed by—Mr. I. B. Sen.

Seconded by—Mr. Hardayal Nag.

XXII

Partition of Midnapore and Mymensing

That this Conference strongly protests against the apprehended partition of the Districts of Midnapore and Mymensing, as it is unnecessary and really against the interests of the inhabitants of the districts and highly expensive.

(From the Chair)

XXIII

Health Officers

That this Conference views with alarm the Resolution of the Government about the appointment of Health Officers, Sanitary Inspectors, the proposed introduction of the Municipal Health Officers' Bill, which in the opinion of this Conference is at present unnecessary, and which will encroach upon the already limited financial resources at the disposal of the Mofussil Municipalities.

(From the Chair)

XXIV

Religious Ministration in Jails

That with a view to reforming the character of prisoners this Conference earnestly requests the Government to make arrangements for religious ministration in Jails for prisoners of all creeds on lines similar to those adopted for European Christian prisoners.

(From the Chair)

XXV

Volunteer Corps

That in the opinion of the Conference, the time has come when Volunteer Corps should be allowed to be raised and organised from amongst the Bengalee population under and subject to the provisions of Act XX of 1869, amended by Act X of 1896 for the 'preservation of life and property of the people' and the preservation of internal peace in the Country.

(From the Chair)

XXVI

That in the opinion of this Conference the Regulations of the Education Department as obtained in East Bengal regarding the admission and withdrawal of pupils of the schools, published in the now defunct Eastern Bengal and Assam Gazette by Notification No. 8902 dated the 15th August, 1910,

are very stringent and quite uncalled for and work great hardship both upon the pupils and their guardians and that as such rules do not prevail in West Bengal and as two Bengals have been reunited the Government of Bengal be urged to abolish the said Regulations so as to bring the rules in harmony with those of West Bengal.

Proposed by—Babu Mathuranath Maitra.

Seconded by—Babu Sureschandra Dasgupta.

XXVII

Arbitration-Boards

That this Conference urges the people to settle their differences by starting local Arbitration Boards.

(From the Chair)

XXVIII

Co-operative Credit Movement

That this Conference urges the people to co-operate with the Government in making the Co-operative credit movement a success.

(From the Chair)

XXIX

Mukhtears

That having regard to the fact that Mukhtears are invested by law with a distinct professional status in criminal trials by virtue of their certificates obtained from the High Court, after passing a recognised examination in law and that the standard

of qualification necessary for appearing at such examination has been raised, this Conference urges that section 4 (r) of the code of Criminal Procedure (Act V of 1898), which is understood to restrict the practice of Mukhtears by the permission of the Court, be so amended as to remove the restriction of permission and allow them to practise freely as of right, as otherwise it is likely to cause great hardship on parties by depriving them of legal aid at a moderate cost.

Proposed by—Babu Trailokyanath Bose, M. A.,
B. L.

Seconded by—Mr. I. B. Sen, Bar-at-law.

XXX

Criminal Conspiracy

This Conference views with alarm the fresh coercive measure passed by the Government of India and styled as the Conspiracy Act in which the new definition of conspiracy not only comprises within its scope offences of all kinds but also acts which may amount to mere illegalities of a civil nature.

This Conference is of opinion that the provision requiring the sanction of the Chief Presidency Magistrate or the District Magistrate in cases of punishment with imprisonment for less than 2 years furnishes no adequate safeguard against the new law of conspiracy being set in motion by overzealous

Executive and Police Officers for the coercion of his Majesty's Indian subjects, when they may happen to incur their displeasure. This Conference therefore prays that the Local Government should make it a rule that no prosecution for Conspiracy should be started in this Presidency without previous reference to and permission of the Local Government.

Proposed by—The Hon'ble Mr. A. C. Roy.

Seconded by—Mr. J. Chowdhuri.

XXXI

That this Conference is of opinion that steps should forthwith be taken to utilise the National Fund for some useful national purpose and that the Standing Committee of the Conference be authorised to request the Trustees to convey a meeting of the subscribers by advertisement and adopt such other means as may be necessary to give effect to this Resolution. This Conference further requests the Trustees to publish the accounts of the national fund every six months. (From the Chair)

XXXII

(a) That this Conference insists that the educational grant should not be mainly consumed in maintaining a large and unnecessarily expensive inspecting staff and in building expensive houses for schools but should be largely appropriated by improving the pay of teachers, grants-in-aid to

schools, free studentship and other direct measures.

(b) That this Conference places on record its dissatisfaction with the present system of Scholarship Examination and recommends that the M. V., M. E., U. P. and L. P. Examinations be held as before.

That this Conference places on record its dissatisfaction with the way, in which text-books and teachers' guides are selected which leads to the placing of undesirable indifferent books in the hands of our boys and girls and calls on the Standing Committee to make a thorough enquiry in the matter and make such representations as may be necessary for the purpose as also to place before the Conference next year a definite scheme for reform in the matter of selection of text books.

Proposed by—Babu Subhashchandra Dasgupta.

Seconded by—Babu Sricharan Sen.

XXXIII

Dacca University

That this Conference protests against the recommendations of the Dacca University Committee on the following amongst other points :—

(a) Separate Art College and degrees for Mahomedans.

(b) A College for well-to-do classes.

(c) Separate representative of Mahomedan

graduates on the Convocation and the Council of the University.

(d) Inadequacy of non-official element in the Convocation and its practical exclusion from the Council.

(e) Want of fully-equipped Medical College.

(f) Want of an Agricultural College.

(g) Recommendation for changing the character of the Bengali language and literature.

(h) The absence of any provision giving option to any private College to be affiliated to the Calcutta University.

(i) The absence of any provision for religious and moral training of students.

(j) The perpetuation of the distinction between Imperial and Provincial Educational Service in the appointment of University and College Professors and Lecturers.

(k) Differential treatment of Mahomedan and Hindu boys in the matter of residence.

(l) Differential treatment of the Anglo-Indians and Indians in the matter of admission into Engineering College.

(m) Want of uniformity in the tests for entrance into the University.

(n) Placing the Eden Girls' School under the management of the College for Women and locating

it in the premises of the Women's College, and also placing it under the Control of the Dacca University any more than boys' schools.

(o) Making the University for all practical purposes, a department of State.

This Conference suggests that Islamic and Sanskritic studies be placed on the same footing among the optional subjects for the Intermediate and B. A. courses.

This Conference further urges upon the Government the necessity for guarding against the idea of a system of repressive discipline in the proposed University and insists that true discipline can only be maintained by promoting healthy association between teachers and pupils, by developing freedom in the students so as to help the growth of a healthy sense of self-respect and self-restraint and 'esprit-de-corps'.

This Conference also protests against the Scheme of the Women's College as framed by the Committee and urges that the education of our girls be mainly under Indian management and be conducted on Indian lines and that a distinguished lady graduate be placed at the head of the institution.

Proposed by—Mr. Nareschandra Sengupta, M. A.,
M. L.

Seconded by—Babu Trailokyanath Basu.

XXXIV

Engineering College

That this Conference, while cordially supporting the proposal for the establishment of an Engineering College at Dacca, desires to record its emphatic protest against the suggestion for abolition of the Civil Engineering College at Sibpur or its removal from the neighbourhood of Calcutta. This Conference also urges upon the Government the necessity for the immediate establishment of a Technological Institute in the vicinity of Calcutta.

(From the Chair)

XXXV

Organisation of the Conference

That with a view to secure the continuity of the work of the Bengal Provincial Conference during the year 1913—1914, this Conference resolves to form a Council in Calcutta consisting of the under-mentioned gentlemen who will have power to add to their number and who are authorised to take all necessary measures to raise funds, to start District Organisations where there are none, to co-operate with existing organisations and to further the work of the Conference up to the next session, by framing in particular a scheme for the guidance of the deliberations of the Conference and of the Subjects Committee and that the Council do circulate a report

thereon for the opinion of the public within six months from now and that the Council do submit a report of their work at the next sitting of the Conference :

1. The Hon'ble Mr. S. N. Banerjee (President).
2. The Hon'ble Mr. B. Chakravarty (Vice-President)
3. Mr. B. N. Basu (Vice-President).
4. Babu Matilal Ghosh.
5. Rai Yatindranath Chowdhury.
6. Mr. A Rasul.
7. Babu Ambikacharan Mazumdar.
8. Babu Anandachandra Roy.
9. Babu Jatramohan Sen.
10. Babu Anathbandhu Guha.
11. Moulvi A. Casem.
12. Mr. J. N. Roy.
13. Babu Kisorimohan Chowdhury.
14. Dr. Nilratan Sarkar.
15. Babu Krishnakumar Mitter.
16. Babu Prithwischandra Roy.
17. Babu Satischandra Chatterjee.
18. Babu Satyananda Bose.
19. Mr. I. B. Sen.
20. Mr. Prabhaschandra Mitter, 34/1, Elgin Road.
21. Mr. Pramathanath Banerjee, 258/10-1, Upper Circular Road.

22. Mr. H. Ghosh, 15/1, Elgin Road.
 23. Mr. Madhusudan Roy, Dinajpur.
 24. Mr. S. P. Sengupta, 44, Ballygunge Circular Road.
 25. Mr. P. Chowdhury, 2, Bright Street.
 26. Mr. Radhakanta Aich, Noakhali.
 27. Mr. Krishnadas Roy, 17, Harochandra Mullick's Lane.
 28. Mr. E. P. Ghosh, Theatre Road.
 29. Mr. Haradaya Nag, Chandpur, Tipperah.
 30. Mr. Pramathanath Sengupta, Noakhali.
 31. Mr. Upendramohan Mitter, Comilla.
 32. Mr. Debkumar Roy Chowdhury, Barisal.
 33. Mr. Saratchandra Guha, Barisal.
 34. Mr. Saratchandra Chakravarty, Dacca.
 35. Mr. Lalitmohan Sen, Dinajpur.
 36. Mr. Jogendrachandra Chakravarty, Dinajpur.
 37. Mr. Nagendranath Sen, Khulna
 38. Mr. Amulyachandra Datta, Chinsurah.
 39. Mr. Nandagopal Bhaduri, Majdia (Nadia).
 40. Mr. B. Pal Chowdhury, Mahesganj (Nadia).
 41. Mr. Latitmohan Das, 82-1, Harrison Road.
 42. Mr. K. B. Datta, 26, Rowland Road, Calcutta.
 43. Mr. J. Chowdhury
 44. Mr. B. K. Lahiri
- } Joint Hony Secretaries.

(From the Chair)

Miscellaneous Notes

1

After the second day's proceedings of the Bengal Provincial Conference (1912), Babu Rasikchandra Chakravarty of Dacca, invited the Conference to that town next year. The proposal was received with great acclamation.

2

Owing to the inability of the Indian members of the Bengal and Imperial Legislative Councils to attend the Bengal Provincial Conference at Dacca during the Easter holidays on account of their preoccupations in the Budget discussions in Calcutta and Delhi, the Secretary to the Provincial Conference Committee issued a manifesto asking the opinions of the leading public men and Associations to determine the time for the sitting of the Conference.

Sir,

You are aware that the sitting of the Bengal Provincial Conference is to be held this year at Dacca. We thought that the Easter Holidays commencing from the 21st March would be convenient for the delegates to attend the meeting and so commenced to make preparations for the erection of the Pandal and the reception of the

delegates. We are now informed that those members of the Bengal and Imperial Legislative Councils who would like to attend the Conference would not be able to do so as they would be very busy at Calcutta and Delhi respectively for the discussion of the budgets. The Provincial Committee at Dacca, therefore, are of opinion that the Session of the Provincial Conference would not be a successful one if those leaders of public opinion were not able to take part in it.

The next session that may be selected for the meeting is the Janmastami holiday which comes off on the 25th August. There being only one day's holiday for the Janmastami, it would not be convenient for the delegates from other districts to attend the Conference. Besides the weather at that time of the year is generally very inclement. The great influx of people amounting to about 10,000, in the city of Dacca during the Janmastami, makes it very unhealthy. There are other local difficulties for which the Provincial Committee are unwilling to select the time for the Session of the Conference at Dacca.

The only other time which may be selected for the purpose is the Muhurram, when there would be holidays for five days. It would be by the 2nd or 3rd of December. The only objection to this session

may be that the session of the Congress which will be held this year at Kurrachi, would be very close to the sitting of the Conference.

Under these circumstances, the Provincial Committee have decided to ascertain the opinion of the leading Public men and Associations in Bengal to determine the time when the Conference may be held here. I would therefore request the favour of your intimating to me your opinion in the matter as early as possible.

Armanitola, Dacca,
the 5th February, 1913.

Saratchandra Chakravarti
Secretary to the Provincial
Committee of the Bengal
Provincial Conference.

3

The Provincial Conference Committee after considering the opinions of various leaders, selected Easter holidays for holding the Provincial Conference. A Reception Committee was formed with the Hon'ble Babu Anandachandra Roy as President.

4

On the 20th February, Babu Aswinikumar : 1900, who was then on a change at Chitrakut in the Central Province signified by a telegram his consent to

become President of the Provincial Conference at Dacca.

5

Notice Issued

I. The Bengal Provincial Conference will be held at Dacca during the next Easter holidays, on the 22nd and 23rd March.

II. No one should be elected a delegate of the Conference who has not completed the age of 21.

III. Delegates should be elected either at a public meeting or at a meeting of a recognised Political Association or Public body.

IV. Each Delegate shall pay a delegate fee of Rs. 2.

V. Delegates from districts other than Dacca will be provided with board and lodging, but they will have to provide their own bedding and mosquito curtains.

VI. The minimum subscription payable by a member of the Reception Committee is Rs. 10.

VII. Delegates who are also members of the Reception Committee will not be required to pay separate delegation fees.

VIII. Visitors will be admitted to the Pandal on the production of tickets which will be sold at Re. 1 for the 1st class and annas eight for the 2nd class for the session.

IX. Distinguished visitors and members of the Reception Committee will be provided with special seats.

X. Lady visitors will be provided with the tickets on application. Special arrangements will be made for zenana ladies.

XI. Secretaries of the District Associations are requested to send intimations, as early as possible, as to the approximate number of delegates coming from their respective districts.

Dacca,

the 24th February, 1913.

Rasikchandra Chakravarty

Saratchandra Chakravarty

Secretaries of the Reception
Committee.

6

An Editorial Note of the Bengalee of 18. 3. 13

We have already appealed to the public bodies both in the city and the districts to elect their delegates to the Provincial Conference which will meet at Dacca during the Easter holidays. There is no time to lose, and those districts which have not yet elected their delegates will, we hope, make no further delay. The Conference will be presided over by Babu Aswinikumar Datta. No better selection could have been made. The reputation which Babu Aswinikumar Datta enjoys as an unselfish public worker is second to that of no other man in the

Province, and his services to Barisal and indirectly to the whole province have won for him the admiration and gratitude of his countrymen. We have no doubt his Presidential address will draw largely from his own experience as an educationist and a public man for over a quarter of a century, and that under his presidency the deliberations of the Conference will be carried on with the sobriety, the earnestness, the enthusiasm and the single-minded zeal for public welfare which have always characterized its proceedings.

7

Election of Delegates*At Barisal*

At a meeting on the 15th March, Babu Haranath Ghosh, Kabiraj Jaminiranjan Sen Kavyatirtha, Babus Saratchandra Guha, Lalitmohan Das and others numbering one hundred were elected delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca.

At Bogra

In a public meeting held under the presidency of Babu Rajaninath Nandi Pleader on the 13th March 1913 in the Bar Library Hall, Babu Sureschandra Dasgupta, B.L., Pleader and Babu Satischandra Sirkar were duly elected delegates from Bogra to attend the session of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Dacca.

At Brahmanberia

At a meeting of the Brahmanberia People's Association the following gentlemen were elected delegates to the Dacca Provincial Conference :—

Babus B'pinbihari Datta, Pleader, Kalikisore Pal, Pleader, Nilkantha Das, Pleader, Upendranath Dattachaudhury, Mukhtear, Girischandra Roy, Bimaranjan Nandi, Mukhtear, Krishnakumar Bhattacharjee, Mukhtear, Binodbihari Bhattacharjee, Pleader.

At Calcutta

At a meeting of the Calcutta District Association the following gentlemen were elected delegates to the Dacca session of the Bengal Provincial Conference :

Hon. Mr. Surendranath Banerjee, Mr. Bhupendranath Basu, Mr. Herambachandra Maitra, Mr. Narendranath Basu, Hon. Dr. Debaprasad Sarbadhikari, Babus Bijoykrishna Bose, K. C. Banerjee. Lt. Col. U. N. Mukherjee, Messrs Lalitmohan Das, Narendranath Sett, Nareschandra Sengupta, Sundarimohan Das, Hemendraprasad Ghosh, S. N. Haldar, A. Rasul, Muralidhar Roy, Hemendranath Sen, Pramathanath Banerjee, Satyendra Bose, Haridas Haldar, Dedar Buksh, Krishnakumar Mitra, Rameschandra Sen, Jogendranath Mukherjee, Gopikrishna Kundu, Prithwis

chandra Roy, R. K. Roy, Raja Yatindranath Chowdhury, Messrs Surendranath Mullick, Mujibar Rahaman, Surendranath Sen, Hon. Mr. B. Chakravarty, Messrs J. Chowdhury, P. Chowdhury, Prabhaschandra Mitra, I. B. Sen, B. K. Lahiri, A. K. Ghosh, M. N. Basu, J. N. Sengupta, J. N. Roy, E. P. Ghosh, C. R. Das, Nandagopal Bhaduri, Kabiraj Jaminiranjan Sen, Messrs Bhabaranjan Majumdar, Hon. Mr. Abdul Casem, Messrs Jnanchandra Roy, Satischandra Sirkar, Jibanchandra Kar, Haranchandra Datta, Dr. J. N. Ghosh, Dr. Pyarisankar Dasgupta, Mr. J. Ghoshal, Mr. P. K. Sen, Mr. Gunadacharan Sen and Mr. H. Ghosh.

At Chandpur

At a public meeting held on 21st March at Chandpur under the presidency of Babu Nabakumar Guha, Pleader, the following gentlemen were elected delegates to the Provincial Conference held at Dacca : Babus Haradaya Nag, Anandachandra Das, Rameschandra Shaw, Jadunath Sen, Rajkumar Datta, Surendranath Mukherjee, Nagendranath Roy, Kalikumar Bhowmic, Basantakumar Ghosh, Hemchandra Basu, Upendranath Ghosh, Jnanadacharan Guha, Sibkrishna Majumdar, Pleaders ; Babus Kshirodlal Ganguly, Suryakumar Chakravarty, Durgaprasad Datta, Monmohan Mazumdar, Dulalchandra Basu, Aswinikanta

Chakravarty, Basantakumar Sen, Bipinbihari Guha, Banamali Ganguly, Kulachandra Basu, Mukhtears and Babus Akshaykumar Mazumdar, Mahendrachandra Karmakar, Doctors Haribhushan Mukherjee, Nibaranchandra Pal, and Nabakanta Mukherjee and Harendrakisore Roy, Editor, 'Nababanga'.

At Chittagong

The Chittagong Association in a general meeting on the evening of the 15th March, elected the following gentlemen delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference at Dacca :

Messrs S. L. Khastagir, J. M. Sengupta, Babus Jatramohan Sen, Jaminikanta Sen, Rasikchandra Hazari, Pulinchandra Das, Atulchandra Datta, Narendrakumar Das, Mohinichandra Das, Kamini-kumar Das, Kazimali Asadali, Iswarchandra Das, Brojendralal Sen, Rameschandra Rakshit, Prankrishna Chakravarty, Nagendralal Choudhury, Purnachandra Choudhury, Nalinikanta Sen, Benimadhab Sen, Hariprasanna Majumdar, Charuchandra Sen, Saradaprasanna Pal, Annadachandra Sen, Mohiarmohan Biswas, Rajanikumar Biswas, Tarakchandra Choudhury.

At Comilla

At a public meeting held on the 16th March, Babus Mathuramohan Deb, Rajaninath Nandi, Kumudbihari Banerjee, Bidhubhushan Datta,

Kamaniyakumar Sinha, Rajanikanta Gupta, Upendramohan Mitra, Narendrachandra Chakravarty, Bimalchandra Chakravarty, Abanimohan Ghosh, Akhilchandra Datta, Bhudhar Das, Sachindrakumar Roy, Anangamohan Ghosh, Basantakumar Mazumdar, Lalitchandra Das, Rajendranath Banerjee, Jogeschandra Sen, Kunjabihari Ghatak, Jatindramohan Mitra, Madanmohan Ghosh, Purnachandra Choudhuri, Durgeschandra Gupta, Dr Usharanjan Majumdar, Hemendrakumar Bose, Rasamoy Roy, Sureschandra Chakravarty, Umeschandra Deb, Rohinikumar Datta, Saratchandra Chakravarty, Kaminikumar Datta, Nilkantha Sen, Kshetramohan Roy, Kunjabihari Das and Moulvi Siddiquir Rahaman and four members of the Mukhtears 'Bar were elected delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca.

At Dacca

At a meeting of the Peoples' Association nearly four hundred delegates were elected from Dacca for the Bengal Provincial Conference.

At Diamond Harbour

At a special meeting of the Diamond Harbour Sarbajanik Hitakari Sabha held on Sunday, at the Sabha office, the following gentlemen were duly elected delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference.

Babus Paresnath Roy Choudhury, B. L.,

Sasibhushan Sarkar, B. L., Bhubanmohan Chatterjee B. L., Jogendranath Bose, B. L., Prabhaschandra Chakravarty, Srischandra Purkait, Bipinbihari De, B. L., Narayanpada Das and Nirmalkumar Sen, B. L.

At Dinajpur

At a meeting of the Dinajpur Association, Kumar Satindunarayan Roy, M. A., and Babus Jatindramohan Sen, Jogeschandra Datta, Rameschandra Neogy, Baradakanta Ganguly, Surendrakumar Sen, Satischandra Roy, Pleaders, were elected delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca.

At Hoogly—Howrah

At a meeting of the Hoogly-Howrah District Association held on the 8th March the following gentlemen were elected delegates to represent the Association at the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca.

Babus Bishnupada Chatterjee, Amulyachandra Datta, Narayanchandra Ganguli, Dasarathi Ghosh, Charuchandra Sinha, Nityadhan Mukherjee, Tinkari Ghosh, Surendranath Roy, Kantichandra Ghosh, Nagendranath Sadhu.

At Howrah

At a meeting of the Howrah Peoples' Association held on Thursday, Babus Charuchandra Sinha, Anathnath Choudhury, Khagendranath Mitra, Khagendra

nath Ganguly, Jyotiprasad Banerjee, Atulkrishna Sinha and Dr Satyasaran Mitra were elected delegates to attend the Dacca Provincial Conference.

At Indian Association (Calcutta)

At a meeting of the Indian Association the following gentlemen were elected delegates of the Provincial Conference held at Dacca during the Easter Holidays ;

Babus Akshaykumar Bose, Atalbihari Ghosh, Bhupendranath Basu, Rai Debendrachandra Ghosh Bahadur, Babus Haranchandra Banerjee, Hemendramohan Basu, Ray Jatindranath Chauduri, Mr. J. Choudhuri, Dr. Purnachandra Nandi, Mr. R. D. Mehta, Babus Ramanimohan Chatterjee, Upendrakisore Roy, Kabiraj Upendranath Sengupta, Babus Satyananda Bose, Pramathanath Banerjee, Akshaykumar De, Basantakumar Bose, Sudhirkumar Lahiri, Mr. G. C. Ghosh, Babu Surendranath Banerjee, Babu Herambachandra Maitra, Dr. Nilratan Sarkar, Babus Prithwischandra Roy, Krishnakumar Mitra, Satyaprasad Sarbadhikari, Debaprasad Sarbadhikari, Nareschandra Sengupta, Matilal Ghosh, Mr. Rasbihari Ghosh, Babu Jogendranath Mukherjee, Kumar Manmathanath Mitra, Mr. A. Rasul, Babus Lalitmohan Das, Jitendralal Banerjee, Bhupatinath Bose, Mr. A. H. Ghuznavi, Mr. P. Choudhury, Babus Annadacharan Sen, Narendranath

Bose, Gispatty Kavyatirtha, Lt. Col. U. N. Mukherjee, Babus Bijoykrishna Bose, Gopikrishna Kundu, Amritachandra Ghosh, Mr. S. N. Bose, Babus Sreekali Ghosh, Surendranath Mallick, Kaliprasanna Chatterjee, Padminimohan Neogi, Gopaldas Choudhury, Moulvi Debar Bus, Babu Bisweswar Sen, Mr. R. C. Banerjee, Babu Ambikacharan Majumdar, Mr. S. K. Mallick, Babus Baikunthanath Sen, Surendranath Dasgupta, Sachindradas Bose, Sasankajiban Roy, Nilkantha Chakravarty, Sailendranath Mitra, Muralidhar Roy, Rai Srinath Pal Bahadur, Ray Bijoylal Datta, Maulvi Abdul Kasem, Babus Hemendranath Sen, Sachindranath Mukherjee, Debkumar Ray Choudhury, Upendrakrishto Mandal, Dr. P. K. Acharya, Babus Hiralal Chakravarty, Satyendranath Sarkar, Mr. K. C. Roy, Mr. U. N. Sen, Mr. I. B. Sen, Babus Nibaranchandra Roy, Atulkrishna Roy, Dr. Upendranath Chakravarti, Babus Kulachandra Roy, Sureschandra Roy, Dr. D. R. Das, Babus Krishtodas Roy, Sudhansubikash Roy, Mr. D. C. Ghosh, Mr. N. C. Bardaloi, Babus Sukumar Mitra, Dr. S. K. Bose, Babus Troilokyanath Chatterjee, Satischandra Chatterjee, Manoranjan Banerjee, Sailendranath Banerjee, Charuchandra Majumdar, Pratapnath Sen, Rev. Mr. B. A. Nag, Babus Kumarkrishna Mitra, Jogeschandra Bose, Surendramohan Bose, Anathbandhu Guha, Surendranath Roy, Satyendranath Roy,

Manmathanath Roy, Bhudevchandra Roy, Kabiraj Hemchandra Sen, Babus Kisorimohan Choudhury, Purnachandra Saha, Prabhaschandra Mitra, Mr. P. K. Sen, and Mr. J. M. Sengupta.

At Jamalpur

The Jamalpur Bar Association elected Babu Dwarakanath Sen, Pleader and Zaminder, Babu Manindramohan Roy, Merchant and Zamindar and Babu Jogeschandra Gupta B. L., Pleader and Talukdar, as delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca.

At Kalighat

At a public meeting held on the 12th March at Kalighat under the auspices of "Kalighat Peoples' Association" it was resolved that the following gentlemen be elected delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference at Dacca :—

Babu Bipinchandra Pal, Messrs C. R. Das, Bar-at-law, B. C. Chatterjee, Bar-at-law, Dr. Benimadhab Bose, Dr Haridas Haldar, Babus Sudhirschandra Banerjee, Saratchandra Sen, Vakil High Court, Nrityagopal Roy Choudhury, B. L., Pleader, Ranjankrishna Banerjee, Zamindar and Atulkrishna Ray, Vakil High Court.

At Krishnanagar

At a meeting of the Nadia District Association Messrs G. M. Dey, B. Lahiri, Pulinbihari Lahiri,

Manmathonath Mukherjee, Sudhanya Pramanik, Nandagopal Bhaduri, Jnanendramohan Datta, Jogindranath Sircar, Surajaranjan Roy were elected delegates to the Dacca Provincial Conference to represent the Nadia District with power to add.

At Maldah

The Maldah Association elected Babus Bipinbihari Ghosh, Gokulbihari Gupta, Jnanada-prasanna Lahiri, Nityagopal Das, Radhikalal Sitiar, Prasannakumar Raha, Kaliprasanna Saha, delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca.

At Naraingunge

Naraingunge Peoples' Association convened a public meeting in the Pleaders' library on the 12th March, 1913 to elect the members of the Reception Committee and delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca. The following gentlemen were elected delegates to the Bengal Conference :—

Babus Harkumar Datta, Nisibhushan Mitra, Sris-chandra Bhattacharjee, Mahimchandra Pal, Asutosh Kar, Rajkumar Gupta, Anandamohan Adya, Jogendrakisore Das, Rajendralal Mazumdar, Jagatchandra Sen, Sasibhushan Datta, Debendra-chandra Mazumdar, Birendrakumar Datta,

Woomeschandra Ghosh, Prasannakumar Das (Junior), Debendrachandra Bhattacharjee, Pulinbihari Chakravarti, Jatindramohan Das, Ruhinikumar Mukherjee, Bharatchandra Saha, Asutosh Bhattacharjee, Gobindachandra Das, Kailaschandra Karmakar, Rajendrakumar Naha, Hariprasanna Das, Basantakumar Pal, Rakhalchandra Das, Mahimchandra Datta, Munsii Abdul Gafur, Babus Maheschandra Dey, Binodranjan Mukherjee, Jnanachandra Das, Sitanath Choudhury, Afjal Chowdhury, Kamini-mohan Roy, Gopalkrishna Guha, Harchandra Nandi, Birajmohan Ghosh, Nagendrachandra Sen, Syamaprasanna Shome, Narendramohan Das, Kalachand Ghosh, Phanibhushan Basu, Debendrachandra Roy, Ramchandra Ghosh, Jatindramohan Guha, Benimadhab Mukhati, Rameschandra Guha, Anukulchandra Guha, Harkanta Banerjee, Nisikanta Datta, Harendralal Ganguli, Hemchandra Sarkar, Radhaballabh Sarkar, Sheikh Asakali, Babus Mahendrachandra Dhar, Surendranath Dhar, Ambikacharan Dhar, Narendranath Dhar, Dr. Prionath Guha, Dr. Surendranath Dhar, Dr. Mahendranath Sengupta, Babus Ambikadayal Sing, Bhupatimohan Das, Ambikacharan Chakravarty, Satischandra Majumdar, Jatindrachandra Chakravarty, Tarakchand Chowdhuri, Lalitmohan Ghosh (Junior), Jnanachandra Saha, Pratapchandra

Chanda, Nibaranchandra Banerjee, Rajanikanta Roy, Nisikanta Roy.

The following gentlemen were elected at Narain-gunge members of the Reception Committee to the Bengal Provincial Conference :—

Babus Surendranath Das, Nandakumar Choudhuri, Syamacharan Bhattacharjee, Bhubaneswar Dhar, Kunjabihari Pal, Kalimohan Sarkar, Gobindachandra Basu, Rajendralal Saha, Radhacharan Modak, Nabadwipchandra Roy, Nibaranchandra Mukherjee, Raimohan Poddar, Mathuramohan Saha, Joychandra Pal, Pratapchandra Chakravarty, Manmohan Pal, Kasiram Bania and Probodhchandra Das.

The Secretary of the Provincial Conference Committee was requested to lay the following resolutions before the Subjects Committee for discussion in the Conference :

(a) That this Conference most respectfully urges upon the Government to take speedy and effective measures to re-excavate the Brahmaputra river which has almost dried up in many parts in the district of Dacca.

(b) That this Conference views with alarm and protests most emphatically against the attempts of some Municipalities in the Dacca division to introduce the meter system in the supply of pure drinking pipe water and respectfully urges upon

the Government not to sanction the same as such steps are sure to cause immense hardship and bring pestilential disease.

At Noakhali

At a meeting held in the Bar library under the presidency of Babu Radhakanta Aich, Vakil, the following gentlemen were elected delegates to attend the Provincial Conference at Dacca :—

Babus Basantakumar Sengupta, Devendrakumar Chatterjee, Asutosh Banerjee, Narendrakumar Sen, Pramathanath Sen, Gopalchandra Nag, Subhamay Datta, Bagalamohan Dasgupta, Priyalal Mukherjee and Pranhari Guha.

At Patiya

Babus Syamacharan Choudhuri, Narendralal Khastgir, Prasannakumar Sen, Mahendrachandra Datta, Jagatchandra Ghosh, Jagatchannandra Bhattacharjee, and Munsii Akbar Ali were elected delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference at a public meeting held at Patiya on the 19th March.

At Patuakhali

A public meeting was held under the presidency of Babu Pyarimohan Sen, a senior pleader of the local Bar at the Mukhtears' Library on the 11th March. The following gentlemen were elected delegates to the Bengal Provincial Conference held at Dacca :

Babus Nripendrachandra Chakravarty, Durgaprasanna Guha, Nikunjabihari Banerjee, Manoranjan Ganguli, Annadacharan Mukherjee, Jogendranath Mukherjee, Anantalal Biswas, Nibaranchandra Ganguli, Dineschandra Banerjee, Basantakumar Dasgupta, Nalinikanta Banerjee, Lalitmohan Sen, Lalitmohan Banerjee, Radharaman Ghosh, Mahendranath Chakravarty, Nakuleswar Mukherjee, Gangacharan Das, Pyarimohan Sen, Hemantakumar Rudra, Bidhubhushan Roy, Jatindramohan Poddar, Upendrachandra Nandi and Akshaykumar Banerjee.

At Rajshahi

At a meeting of the Rajshahi District Congress Committee held on the 12th March the following gentlemen were elected delegates to the Provincial Conference held at Dacca :

Babus Anukulchandra Chakravarty, Sailendrasundar Mazumdar, Jatindramohan Chaudhury, Surendra Moitra, Ramanimohan Chaudhuri, Kisorimohan Chaudhuri, Sreegobinda Roy, Saradanath Datta, Saradacharan Mazumdar, Kedarnath Mazumdar and Kumar Khagendranarayan Roy.

8

An editorial note of the Dacca Herald in March 1913 :

We understand that the Conference authorities are experiencing great difficulty in raising a body

of volunteers for service in connection with the ensuing Conference owing to an excess of zeal on the part of the local police which is wholly unwarranted. What the police are doing, it seems, is to make quite needless enquiries about the intending Volunteers, their names, homes, occupations etc. Why the police should go about doing this, especially at a time when they have so much to do by way of finding out real criminals, we are entirely unable to understand. There seem to be a class of policemen at Dacca, as elsewhere, who imagine that it is their duty to do everything except what they are paid for.

9

Recruitment of Volunteers

Volunteers were recently enlisted from the public for the Bengal Provincial Conference but on account of usual attention of the police most of them were scared away. On the 18th March at a meeting, the Barristers, Pleaders and Doctors offered their services as volunteers and were enlisted as such. Babu Trailokyanath Basu, Vakil, aged about 65 years was elected Captain of the Volunteers and he accepted the offer with great earnestness.

10

The Bengal Provincial Conference at its Annual Session at Chittagong in 1912 resolved to form a Standing Committee in Calcutta with a view to secure the continuity of the work of the Conference during the year 1912-13. Twentyone gentlemen were elected by the Conference to form the Standing Committee with three of them as office-bearers for the year 1912-13. At a meeting of the Committee held in Calcutta on the 17th April 1912 and under the power of the Committee to add to its number, the Committee invited certain gentlemen to join it. These gentlemen were so chosen as to enable every district in this presidency to be represented on the Committee wherever possible by two persons, at least one of whom would ordinarily be a resident in Calcutta and thus be able to represent his district in the deliberations of the Committee. This principle however could not be fully carried out in practice as several of these gentlemen did not respond to the invitation. Twentythree gentlemen, however, joined the Committee after having signed a form. Efforts were made to collect statistics of the organisations existing in different parts of the country with which the Committee could co-operate and thus indirectly to find out the places where no such associations existed. Thus sufficient foundation was

laid for the work of the organisation and further progress in this direction was only a question of time. To start with, the Committee did not consider it desirable to make any appeal for funds. It was confident, however, that the country already realised the utility of the work of the Committee and would come forward with funds whenever necessary.

Two matters of great importance came up for the consideration of the Government during the current year, viz., the question of the modification of the Council Regulations and the Report of the Committee appointed by the Government regarding the proposed University of Dacca. So far as the Council Regulations were concerned the Committee invited opinion from different parts of the Presidency, and in the light of suggestions received from amongst other places Chittagong, Barisal, Noakhali, Comilla, Rajshahi, Nadia, Baharampur and Suri, the Committee drew up a representation which was duly sent to the proper authorities.

The Committee regretted that the very limited time at its disposal to communicate its views on the Dacca University Committee's Report to the Government did not enable it to pursue the same course as in connection with the Council Regulations, viz., to ascertain local opinion in various parts of this country in this connection. The Committee trusted,

however, that its labours in respect as embodied in its representation to the Government which had been separately printed and distributed would have the approval of the country and the Conference.

In view of the inadequate provision for the representation of the educated community and the middle classes in the Bengal Legislative Council, the Committee met and considered the advisability of running particular candidates belonging to the educated and middle classes for certain constituencies ; but it was of opinion that in the absence of direct authority from the Conference it should refrain from taking steps in that behalf.

At the request of the Secretary of the Reception Committee of the Bengal Provincial Conference at Dacca, the Standing Committee made its suggestions as to the subjects which should be placed before the Conference for the consideration.

During that year the Committee had seven formal sittings in which the above matters were discussed and decisions were arrived at. The Committee had besides a good many informal meetings in which groups of members participated and discussed various questions of public importance with gentlemen coming from different parts of the country and interested in such questions. In this way, amongst others, the Committee discussed the

question of territorial redistribution with gentlemen from fringe areas which unfortunately were no longer within this Presidency. Similarly some of the members of the Committee met and discussed matters in connection with the recent sittings of the Public Services Commission in Calcutta. A section of the Committee duly considered certain suggestions made by the Dinajpur Association for the promotion of technical education. In response to the demand made by the domiciled Bengali Community in the new Province of Behar and Orissa, three members of the Committee suggested what was considered to be the best definition of 'domicile' so far as they were concerned and what evidence should be required for its proof. The Committee also informally considered the question of Arbitration Boards for amicable settlement of disputes generally, and disputes between Hindus and Mahomedans in particular.

In conclusion the Committee felt called upon to make certain suggestions as to the aims of the Conference and how in the opinion of the Committee those aims were to be given effect to. The Committee suggested that the Bengal Provincial Conference should endeavour to bring to a focus the educated Bengali opinion on a variety of topics, ordinarily speaking, of more or less Provincial interest. Not

only what may be called the political affairs but the whole line of national advancement should be its concern. It has so far sought to combine deliberative proceedings of a protracted character with popular enthusiasm, but it is suggested that in future it should draw attention to only a few questions of paramount and burning importance so that public attention may be arrested to its proceedings.

To secure the continuity of work of the Conference, the Committee suggests that a representative council of a comparatively few members should be annually elected by the Conference with power to add to its number. This body should be known and styled as 'The Council of the Conference.' This Council should take the place of the Standing Committee and be the mouthpiece of the Conference for the year succeeding and should meet whenever necessary. While the Conference should express the considered opinions of the educated community throughout this Presidency once a year, the Council will be able to express such opinion whenever occasion may call for an authoritative pronouncement.

The Council in its turn should work through a number of Standing Committees or individuals to be appointed by itself. These committees or individuals should study the various question to be

referred to them by the Council and that Resolutions and Representations or Reports dealing with these matters should in the first instance be prepared by them and should after adoption by the Council be sent to the proper quarters. The Committee however recommends that in a country of such vast distances and under the conditions now existing, it will be desirable for the present to entrust the work of study to individuals rather than to Committees of individuals.

To carry out the work of the proposed Council properly, the Committee recommends that the Conference should appoint a President, two Secretaries and one Treasurer and devise means to secure funds for the appointment of two whole-time paid agents for work in Calcutta, and more particularly in the mofussil. Their salary along with the cost of a small establishment, stationery, stamps, travelling expenses will come up on an average to Rs 150 a month. To meet this monthly cost the Committee suggests that the Dacca Conference should earmark one-half of the total delegation fees received by them and a further one-half of any surplus that may be in the hands of the Reception Committee after meeting the expenses of the Dacca Conference. The Committee further recommends that in future the delegation fee should be raised to

Rs. 5 for each delegate and the Council should receive one-half of the total sum realised by way of delegation fees and one-half of such surplus as already mentioned. The Council will also be entitled to an affiliation fee of Rs. 5 per annum from such organisations as desired to be affiliated to the Conference. Over and above these sums the Committee should be entitled to a monthly subscription of Re. 1 from each member of the Council.

11

An Editorial Note of the 'Bengalee' On 25. 3. 13

The Bengal Provincial Conference

The Bengal Provincial Conference opened its sittings at Dacca on Saturday last. The pandal which provided accommodation for 4,000 people was filled to its utmost capacity, and great enthusiasm appears to have characterised the proceedings. The Hon'ble Babu Anandachandra Roy, Chairman of the Reception Committee, made an interesting speech in welcoming the delegates, in the course of which he regretted that though the partition had been modified the whole of the Bengali-speaking people had not been placed under one administration. Babu Anandachandra Roy expressed the hope that it would still be possible to get the wrong righted. We fully share this hope. Many settled facts have been unsettled before now, and if only we

are true to ourselves, if only the community will carry on the struggle strenuously and earnestly, there are no reasons to doubt that constitutional agitation will once more triumph over official opposition. The part of the Chairman's speech which will be read with a sense of humiliation coupled with indignation all over the province and the country is that in which he referred to the difficulties which the Reception Committee had experienced in the matter of raising a body of volunteers. "We had hoped", said Babu Anandachandra, "that with the removal of the partition and the advent of a Governor imbued with British ideas of administration, the nightmare that was sitting on us would lift. Unfortunately it has not, and the petty and unnecessary exasperation of pinpricks continues. We have practically been debarred from enlisting our young men as volunteers. Those who agreed to serve did not belong to any Government school or college, but the police wanted their names and particulars. Our young friends were unwilling to figure in the rolls of the secret police and no one knew what might be in store for them." The Conference authorities, therefore, had to do the best they could without the help of that section of the community who ever since the birth of the Congress and Conferences have year after year supplied a brilliant band of voluntary workers and

contributed in no small measure to the success of those bodies. The local leaders were, however, fully equal to the occasion. A body of volunteers was raised from among older people under the leadership of Babu Trailokyanath Bose who, as the Chairman of the Reception Committee pertinently remarked, was only a neck removed from him in the race of life. All honour to the patriotic gentlemen who thus did their duty to the country, but what are we to think of the conduct of the police? Two years ago there would have been nothing out of the ordinary in such conduct on the part of the police. To-day it is singularly out of harmony with the general policy of the administration. Those who are anxious that this policy should succeed owe it as much to themselves as to the people to see that their intentions are not frustrated by the attitude and conduct of their subordinates. Frustrated it must surely be by such conduct as that of the Police on this occasion. Nothing, we are bound to say, is more calculated to revive the bitter memories of the past—memories which Lord Carmichael asked our people to forget and which they are, indeed, anxious to forget—than an occasional resort to the methods of the past.

The Chairman's address was followed by an admirable speech delivered by Babu Bhupendranath

Basu in proposing Babu Aswinikumar Datta to the Chair. The speech recounted the services of the President-elect to the country, and especially to the province, in terms of eloquent eulogy from which no one who knows anything about the unostentatious and unobtrusive life of entirely ungrudging and selfless toil for the public good which Babu Aswinikumar Datta has lived for nearly a quarter of a century will withhold his assent. "His life and character" said Babu Bhupendranath, "has been a great and potent force in the formation of the character of our people and in the development of those activities which have secured for us an abiding place in the history of the country. This is literally true. But the part of the speech which will appeal most to the public is the speaker's feeling reference to the deportation of Babu Aswinikumar and eight other Bengali gentlemen in December, 1908. "Man or woman, young or old," exclaimed Babu Bhupendranath in his best manner, "which of us here will not recall with a feeling of emotion the eventful evening of December, 1908, when my friend, one of the noblest men Bengal has ever produced, a man inspired by the purest and highest ideals and to whose mind the very idea of criminality would be repugnant was suddenly kidnapped from his house in Barisal without any

cause being shown?" The one redeeming feature about the unfortunate doings of that eventful evening is that the country has refused to ratify them—that Babu Aswinikumar has not for a day or an hour fallen in the estimation of his countrymen, but that, on the other hand, his unmerited sufferings have only made him dearer to them. By electing him to preside over the Provincial Conference they have given the world to understand that they have their own ideas of men and things and that they treat men according to their deserts and not in accordance with what they are asked to believe about them by men in authority. The speech which Babu Aswinikumar made as President of the Conference appears from the summary to have been entirely worthy of the occasion. The gospel he preached was the gospel he and other nationalist leaders have always preached, the gospel of nationality, of unity among all sections of the community, of self-help and steady, organised and entirely selfless endeavour to raise the country to the level of other self-governing units of the Empire and other self-governing nations. Babu Aswinikumar and the older leaders have throughout the greater part of their lives striven to do this work and have done their duty. It is for those who will come after them to continue their work and carry it on to its destined goal.

*An Editorial Note of the 'Bengalee' on 26. 3. 13**Swadeshism*

No part of the Presidential address of the Bengal Provincial Conference will be read with greater interest than that in which Bibu Aswinikumar deplored the decadence of the Swadeshi spirit. They must call back the Swadeshi spirit, said the President, its enthusiasm and vigour in order that they might rise economically, socially and morally. It was imperative, he added, that the Government and the people should work shoulder to shoulder in love and confidence. There may perhaps be a difference of opinion as to the precise position of the Swadeshi movement at present—there are certainly many who will not admit that the spirit, as distinguished from the movement, of Swadeshism, is decadent. Many have been the causes, they say, which have operated to check the growth of the demonstrative side of Swadeshism, but the spirit is still there, alert and active, though manifesting itself silently and noiselessly and under a sense of restraint imposed upon it from without. But even those who do not accept the President's conclusion will admit that the appeal which he made to his audience and through them to the country at large to cultivate the spirit of Swadeshism was entirely worthy of the occasion and the man. It is indeed impossible to

doubt that with the progress of Swadeshism the cause of the country's regeneration is inseparably bound up. They know not what Swadeshism is who look upon it merely as a substitute for Protection, in other words, merely as an economic doctrine. As an economic doctrine merely, it has been claimed for Swadeshism by some of its advocates that it is decidedly better and more desirable than protection. It is certainly free from some of the strongest objections that are usually urged against orthodox methods of protection, especially against protective tariffs, by advocates of Free Trade. One has only to read the interesting speech which Sir Guy Fleetwood Wilson made the other day in reply to Sir G. M. Chitnavis's resolution advocating preferential tariffs, to see that many of the objections which the Finance Minister urged against the adoption of a protective policy, even if valid, would not hold good against Swadeshism. Two of the most formidable objections to every system of protective tariff are (1) that they impose a burden upon the general population by artificially raising prices and (2) that it is far easier to impose a protective duty than to repeal it, and what usually happens is that an industry once protected will always continue to be protected, thus taking the ground from under the feet of those economists who, like List, advocate Protection only

for transitional stages or who, like Mill, would extend Protection only to infant industries. There is absolutely no doubt that the experience of Protectionist countries like Germany and United States lends considerable support to the view that Protection increases the cost of living and that once protective tariffs are adopted even for a limited number of industries and for a limited period there is really no knowing where and when they would stop. But obviously Swadeshim is less open to these objections, especially to the last, than Protection. As regards Protection itself, these arguments, as we have repeatedly pointed out, are by no means conclusive, and for one thing they, like most of the arguments against Protection, overlook the fact that no one, at least in these days, regards Protection as an unqualified or universal blessing. That Free Trade has much to be said in its favour, that circumstances are not only conceivable but exist where Free Trade is a blessing and Protection a curse, no one denies. The question is not whether Free Trade is ever a blessing or even whether Free Trade does not offer greater advantages to a given country than Protection does ; but simply and solely whether Free Trade is and must always be preferable to Protection and whether it is preferable to some form of Protection for India and just at the present moment.

It cannot unfortunately be denied that whatever good Free Trade may have done elsewhere—in England for example—in India it has been largely instrumental in reducing the country to its present economic position—its position as mainly a producer of raw materials. That this result is partly due to the unfair and unjust policy which England followed in regard to India in those days when she was still a protectionist country is perfectly true, but the adoption of the policy of unrestricted competition has certainly completed the work which adverse protection tariffs began. It is possible to argue that Free Trade has done nothing more than compel the country's capital and labour to flow into those channels where they have the greatest natural advantages and that, therefore, there has been no economic loss. To see the utter absurdity of this argument, we have only to bear in mind that, if accepted as valid, it would have reduced the United States of America to the position of a country producing merely raw cotton. It is not difficult to show that merely from an economic point of view such a position would be wholly unsound, but even if it were so, the economic point of view is not the only nor the highest point of view from which economic questions have to be looked at. After all what a country requires is something more than

merely cheap goods—no matter how they are obtained. What it does require, as has been well said, is to make the best, the completest and the most diversified use of its soil, its climate, its opportunities and the intellectual and moral qualities of its population. It is from this point of view, that Protection is sometimes not only an absolute necessity but the highest duty. And it is from this point of view that Swadeshism not only does much of what Protection is intended to do and is at the same time free from at least some of its objectionable features, but is exactly the thing that we require. It is obvious that any form of protection, by itself, is only part of the methods by which a country can realise its highest potentialities. Swadeshism, on the other hand, comprehends all these methods. It is for this reason that Bengal, in the memorable years following the partition, came to be regarded as synonymous with nationalism itself. Apart altogether from its economic importance, the element of sacrifice it necessarily involves has a moral and spiritual value all its own, being wholly voluntary, and is exactly the thing that is needed to weld the races and communities in India into a self-conscious nationality. We have not the least doubt that Babu Aswinikumar Datta's appeal—and it could not have emanated from a worthier or more appropriate

source—will not fall upon heedless ears and that man and woman, young and old, every Indian will regard Swadeshism in all its varied aspects as something sacred and holy. For what is Swadeshism if not recognition of our paramount duty to help, to the utmost extent possible and whatever personal sacrifice, in the evolution of India into a strong, a self-respecting, a self-conscious unit of the Empire and of humanity.

Conference

From all accounts the Bengal Provincial Conference this year appears to have been as great a success as any of its predecessors. The public of Dacca and especially the bar, appears to have left no stone unturned to see that the preparations were quite adequate and that the Conference might be worthy of the Capital of East Bengal. These efforts were crowned with complete success. The arrangements left nothing to be desired and the proceedings of the Conference were worthy of the best traditions of that body. The resolutions, thirty-four in number, covered almost every subject of any importance and the speeches appear, in some cases at least, to have reached a high water-mark. But the most significant feature was the enthusiasm which characterised the proceedings. It was a sight to see Babu Trailokya-

nath and other local leaders work like menials in attending to the comforts and convenience of the delegates. The duty had in former years been appropriately performed by younger men, but this year it fell to them, thanks to the overzealousness of the police. In performing this duty cheerfully and ungrudgingly they not only covered themselves with glory, but set an example of the highest value to the country. The country has every reason to be proud of such sons.

13

*Successful Session**As reported in the Bengalee*

The session of the Bengal Provincial Conference which has just ended in the historic city of Dacca will leave a lasting impression in the minds of those who take interest in the political advancement of the Province. It evoked an amount of enthusiasm throughout the proceedings which will long live in the memory of those who attended the sittings. Nobody left the pandal yesterday without feeling that it indicated the turning point in the tide of our political life, which was at a low ebb for some time past. This was also the assurance of two of our veteran leaders, Babus Aswinikumar Datta and Bhupendranath Basu who, as they said, saw the seeds of a new life in the Province. If they do not

prove false prophets, well may our countrymen of Dacca congratulate themselves and feel recompensed for the sacrifice they have made to make the Conference the success it has been.

The people of Dacca had to fight against many difficulties. The short time at their disposal, the utmost caution they had to observe in running matters smooth amid conflicting interests were no mean obstacles in their way. But these were not all. The partition was annulled but it appears its effluvium still remained at Dacca, at any rate. An unforeseen difficulty arose from a quarter never friendly to the popular cause. In the absence of any better occupation to justify their existence the redoubtable police of the now-defunct Government of E. B. and Assam, it is said, directed their ominous attention to the young men—utterly innocent of any connection with any department of Government—who preferred their services as volunteers to wait upon the delegates. True to their traditions they brought all pressures to bear upon about 50 young men to desist from their harmless labour of love. Such serious obstacles thrown in their midst at the eleventh hour might have thrown the promoters of any huge organisation out of their gear. But when true patriotism throbs in the bosom of a people, when love of the motherland summons them to duty there

is nothing so powerful as to effectively hinder their progress. In the name of the motherland the leaders of Dacca determined their course of action without delay for there was no time to lose. "There will be no Alps" was their motto. They soon formed a volunteer corps the like of which was never thought of anywhere in the country. Barristers, pleaders, doctors, mukhtears, independent elderly men took up 'Bande Mataram' badges. Babu Trailokyanath Basu, M.A., B.L., Vakil, leader of the local bar, Mr. P. K. Bose, Bar-at-Law, Babus Saratchandra Chakravarty, B.L., Chairman of the Municipality, Rasikchandra Chakravarty, B.L., Rajanikanta Gupta, Mr. N. K. Nag, Bar-at-law—to name only a few—were among the volunteers to serve the delegates. It was a sight for the gods to see when Trailokyanath, proud in the paraphernalia of a national volunteer, but down in age yet striving to stand erect with a sense of duty formed a procession with his friends, most of them grandfathers of several children to receive the President-elect and other leading delegates. The whole audience was visibly moved, tears rolled down many young cheeks and, if we mistake not, some people who were also present at the reporters' table and elsewhere hung down their heads in shame. Shouts of 'Bande Mataram' came out of sobbing hearts and as they passed away a solemn silence

prevailed all eyes rivetted towards the band of volunteers. It was no wonder that when Babus Anandachandra Roy, Bhupendranath Basu and Aswinikumar Datta in their respective speeches referred to these extraordinary volunteers an overwhelming feeling of joy and sorrow checked their utterance. Was there any one among the 4,000 people—ladies and gentlemen, who assembled there, who was not struck by the fiery patriotism which was hidden in him when Babu Trailokyanath, while seconding the proposal for the election of President, said that the badges that they were wearing were symbolical of the duty that they owed to the motherland and nobody need be ashamed to wear them.

The delegates who represented with one or two exceptions all the districts of Bengal numbered close upon 500. There were several delegates from Sylhet and other fringe areas and until all the Bengali-speaking people were not placed under one administration these gentlemen would continue to attend as a sort of co-opted delegates. The following gentlemen went to attend the Conference from Calcutta : Babu Bhupendranath Basu, Messrs B. Chakravarty, B. K. Lahiri, E. P. Ghose, Prithwis-chandra Roy, Satyendranath Bose, I. B. Sen, M. N. Basu, Pramathanath Banerjee, Nareshodandra Sengupta, Lalitmohan Das, Satischandra Chatterjee,

Sasankajiban Roy, Kabiraj Jaminimohan Sengupta, and Babu Bishnupada Chatterjee of Hooghly. The absence of Babus Surendranath Banerjee and Ambikacharan Majumdar was regretted by all. In the case of the former, however, they consoled themselves by the fact that a duty by no means less important necessitate dhis absence. Whenever his name was mentioned loud applauses interrupted the speakers.

A few words about the discussions in the Subjects Committee may not be quite uninteresting. Mr. B. K. Lahiri and Babu Pramathanath Banerjee were the two peshkars in the Subjects Committee. They drafted and redrafted the resolutions until it was difficult for them to read their own composition and Mr. Prithwischandra Roy was there to put the thing 'in a better language'. The two peshkars often went out of their way and took active part in the discussions. We understand there was a tug fight with regard to the resolution on the Dacca University. In this as was rightly anticipated Babu Nareschandra Sen and Mr. I. B. Sen led what we can call the opposition and Mr. P. K. Basu instructed Mr. Priyanath Sen of the 'Herald' watched the proceedings on behalf of the supporters of the scheme. It was decided to protest against no fewer than about a score objectionable features in the recommendation of the Dacca

University Committee. Mr. I. B. Sen's amendment that let there be all the different Colleges at Dacca without a second University was ruled out of order. Heated discussions took place between Mr. Lahiri and Mr. P. K. Basu and each accused the other of being very sensitive. Nobody can say which way the scale turned. There was also heated discussions on the Engineering College resolution but at the instance of the President the resolution was drafted before the discussion was led beyond the bounds of a temperate debate. During the discussion on the resolution expressing dissatisfaction at the way in which the text-books were selected a gentleman produced a book which was prescribed for boys as well as girls and read out portion of it. Although the language was hardly understandable it could not hide the indecent sentiment that characterised the writing. Cries of 'shame' greeted the author as his name was mentioned. The other resolutions were framed without much of a discussion.

Now as regards the proceedings of the second day, the attendance was larger than on the first day.

Most of the speeches on the resolutions were of a high order, to the point, moderate and judicious. Some of the speeches were not without a touch of humour as for instance, the speeches of Mr. Chakra-

varty, Babu Bishnupada Chatterjee and Mr. J. Choudhury, other notable speeches were those of Babu Bhupendranath Basu, Mr. Lahiri, Mr. E. P. Ghosh, Babus Nareschandra Sengupta, Surendranath Sen, and Babu Annadachandra Roy. The speeches on Railway Communication (Resolution IX), were very amusing as each speaker described the line the construction of which he advocated, as the most important of all the lines prayed for. Babu Bhupendranath Bose in moving an amendment to the resolution on Provincial Executive and Judicial Services delivered an admirable speech in the course of which he made an appeal to postpone that part of the resolution which recommended the recruitmen to Judicial service also by competition. He paid a high eulogium to the members of the service and urged that nothing should be done without giving an opportunity to all concerned to discuss the subject. The amendment was carried unanimously. The speeches of Mr. J. Choudhury and Bishnupada Chatterjee on the conspiracy Bill were very humorous and gave rise to roars of laughter. Mr. Choudhury sarcastically said that the law was so elastic that even the snoring of Mr. Prithwischandra Roy and Babu Bishnupada Chatterjee might be well be construed as a conspiracy to commit crime. Babu Bishnupada went so far as to say that the whispers

of a newly married couple might also form the subject matter of a conspiracy.

Babu Akhilchandra Datta's invitation to hold the next sitting of the Conference at Comilla was received with loud cheers.

.After the regular proceedings of the Conference were over followed some very interesting speeches. Babu Bhupendranath Basu, at the wishes of the President whose voice altogether sank owing to the very strain in delivering the Presidential address, rose to thank the people of Dacca for the reception. Speaking in Bengali he said that the way in which the people of Dacca brought the Conference to a successful close inspired them with the hope that a new tide came to the drying river. He thought that a relaxation came over the political life of Bengal but now there was hope in despair. They again heard like Ramprasad, the sweet call of the Mother. The people of Dacca set an example to the people of the rest of Bengal—to the people of India. Let all Bengalees be grateful to the people of Dacca. Thanks to the powers that be which prevented young men becoming volunteers and they saw the unique sight of men like Babu Trailokyanath Basu as volunteers forgetting the dignity of their position and devoting themselves like menials in serving the delegates. Turning to the ladies present Mr. Basu

held out to them the examples of Sakuntala, Damayanti, Gargi, Atreyi, Droupadi, Sabitri, and Sita and said that their presence at the Conference would give an added impetus to their zeal in the cause of the country. Babu Anandamohan Ray had deceived him when he told him that it would be impossible for the people of Dacca to make suitable arrangement for the reception of the delegates. All that he could say was that he was simply over-joyed at the brotherly love and extraordinary devotion to duty of the people of Dacca for which they were grateful. The Dacca Conference would bring a new life into the nation and it would ever be memorable in the history of the Conference.

Mr. Chakravarty who followed in the course of a humorous speech paid a high eulogy to the people of Dacca for the grand reception accorded to him. Speaking seriously he said : I can assure you that we never had such pleasant time. We have been really affected beyond all expression by the kindness you have shown and by the grand success of the Conference. There has been a combination with regard to the selection of the President, Chairman of the Reception Committee, the members of the Reception Committee, the Captain of the Volunteers and the delegates of Dacca and from other places for the purpose of making the Conference a success. But

to one thing I attach greater importance. I refer to the attendance of the ladies. It is a hopeful sign. It is they who make our men. It is they who make our boys who will take up the work we have been doing and doing indifferently. They were the persons who will teach their sons to become good citizens.

Babu Rasikchandra Chakravarty proposed a vote of thanks in an admirable Bengali speech. Babus Mahendranath Ghosh, Gobindrachandra Bhowal and Rajendrakumar Mozumder also joined in the expressions of Babu Rasikchandra Chakravarty.

Babu Aswinikumar in reply spoke in choking voice. He specially attached importance to the attendance of ladies and made an earnest appeal to them to stick to what they had been doing in the cause of Swadeshi.

Thus ended the proceedings of the Dacca session of the Provincial Conference. Let us hope the success of the Conference and the noble example of the leaders of the Dacca bar will have an abiding effect on our people.

Previous Bengal Provincial Conferences.

Year	Place	President
1888	Calcutta	Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar.
1889	Calcutta	Raja Pearymohon Mukerjee.
1890	Calcutta	Pringle Kennedy.
1891	Calcutta	Rev. Mr. Beck.
1892	Calcutta	Baikunthanath Sen,
1893	No Session	
1894	Calcutta	Narendranath Sen.
1895	Berhampur	Anandamohon Bose.
1896	Krishnagar	Guruprasad Sen.
1897	Natore	Satyendranath Tagore.
1898	Dacca	Kalicharan Bandopadhyaya.
1899	Burdwan	Ambikacharan Mojumder.
1900	Bhagalpur	Raja Benoykrishna Deb.
1901	Midnapur	Nagendranath Ghosh.
1902	No Session	
1903	Berhampur	Maharaja Jagadindranath Roy
1904	Burdwan	Asutosh Chaudhuri.
1905	Mymensing	Bhupendranath Bose.
1906	Barisal	Abdul Rasul.
1907	Berhampur	Dipnarain Singh.
1908	Pabna	Rabindranath Tagore.
1909	Hooghly	Baikunthanath Sen.
1910	Calcutta	Ambikacharan Majumder.
1911	Faridpur	Rai Yatindranath Chaudhury.
1912	Chittagong	Abdul Rasul.

